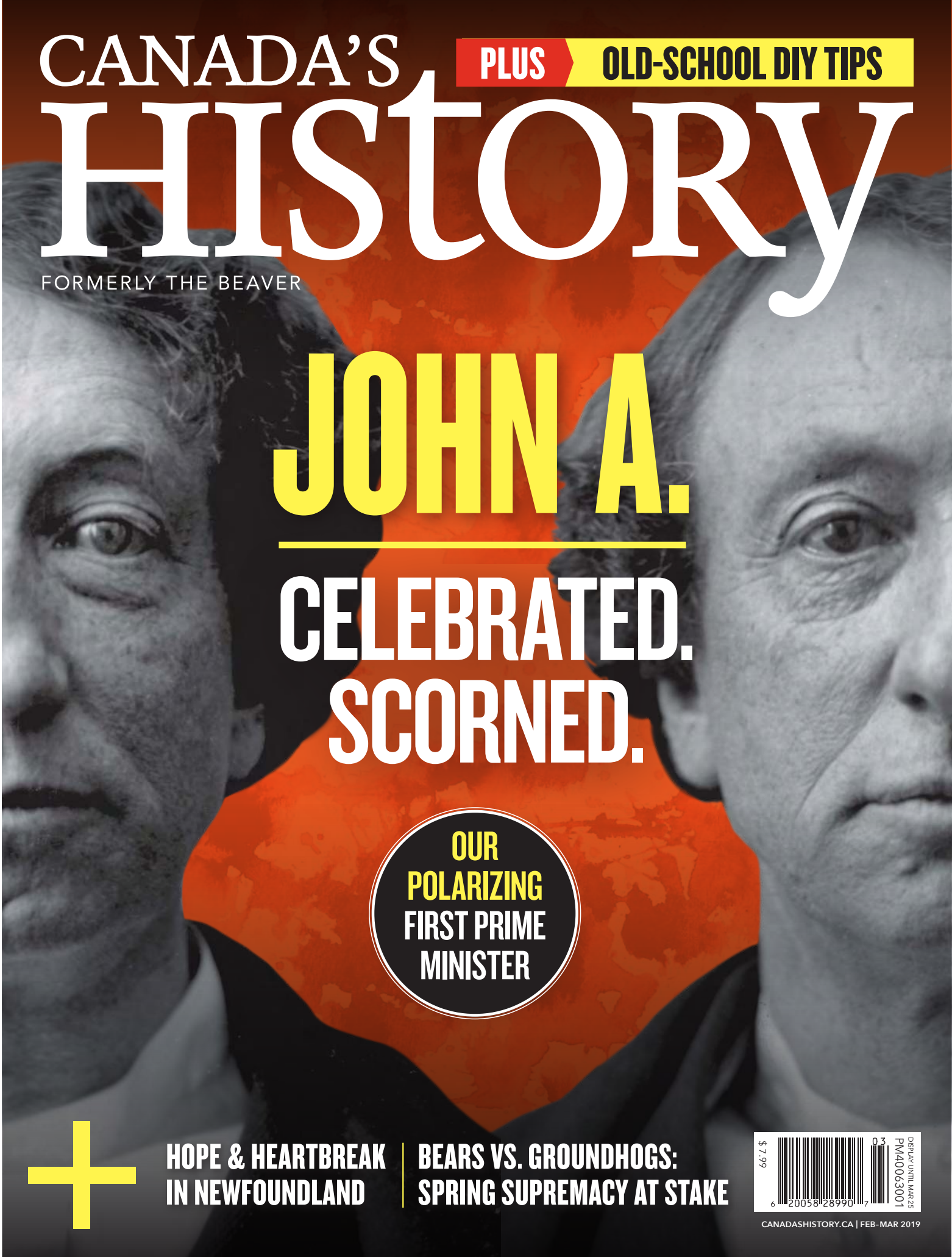
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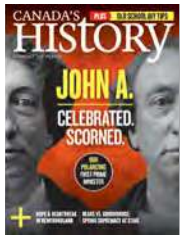


On the cover

A portrait of Prime Minister John A. Macdonald that was made in Ottawa in January 1868 by William James Topley.

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## COMING UP IN CANADA'S HISTORY

**Strike!** Examining the far-reaching impacts of the Winnipeg General Strike, one hundred years after the labour-history milestone.

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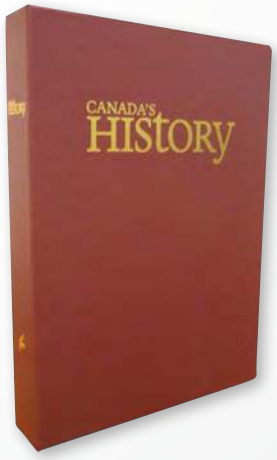


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CANADA'S HISTORY

# The past, tense

Nellie McClung, the accomplished first-wave feminist, once dismissed her detractors by saying, "Never retract, never explain, never apologize — get the thing done and let them howl!"

McClung was fearless, and her followers loved her for it. She also got results: McClung played a key role in the suffrage wars of the early 1900s, and was later a member of the "Famous Five" who won legal recognition of women as persons.

In 2004, an image of the Famous Five was included on the back of the fifty-dollar bill. Twelve years later, the Famous Five's run ended, and the Bank of Canada began searching for an individual woman to feature on a banknote.

The Angus Reid Institute decided to poll the public, and McClung, at twenty-seven per cent, got the most votes.

Despite this, she didn't even make the Bank of Canada's short list. One suspects that this was in part due to her support of eugenics. Widely supported during McClung's era, this policy is today universally denounced.

McClung's fall from grace isn't unique. Across Canada and around the world, former idols are being knocked off their pedestals.

Chief among them is the man they called "the Old Chieftain" — our first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald. In recent months, statues of Macdonald have been vandalized and even removed from public view.

In this issue, we examine Macdonald's complicated and controversial legacy. Our essayists, Frédéric Boily, Charlotte Gray, Lee Maracle, and Christopher Moore, weigh the prime minister's accomplishments against his faults and decide whether he deserves our ire or admiration.

Elsewhere, Western University historian Alan MacEachern recalls a time when Canadians looked to bears, and not groundhogs, for their meteorological prognosticating; and *Canada's History*'s staff writers offer a DIY guide to surviving early Canada.

As for Macdonald, he will undoubtedly remain a lightning rod of controversy for the foreseeable future. And commemorations will continue to be problematic, regardless of who is being honoured. If your history heroes have feet of clay, even the best-built statues will eventually crumble.

But perhaps this ongoing debate speaks to Canada's growing cultural maturity. As a society, we're moving beyond the practice of simply lionizing the past and those who lived there.

Shining a light on the darkest parts of our history is crucial if we hope to blaze a brighter trail into the future. But we must be cautious: Rushing to judgment without first weighing the context of past decisions isn't the answer.

We need to ensure that the harsh glare of hindsight doesn't blind us when assessing the difficult — and sometimes impossible — choices that led to the Canada of today.

Mark Reid

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Alan MacEachern** teaches history at Western University. He specializes in environmental and climate history and was the founding director of NiCHE: Network in Canadian History & Environment.

**Christopher Moore** (christophermoore.ca) comments in every issue of Canada's History. He is the author of many books about Canadian history, including *1867: How the Fathers Made a Deal.*

**Frédéric Boily** is a professor of political science at the University of Alberta's Faculté Saint-Jean. He is the author of several books including *John A. Macdonald: Les ambiguïtés de la modération politique*.

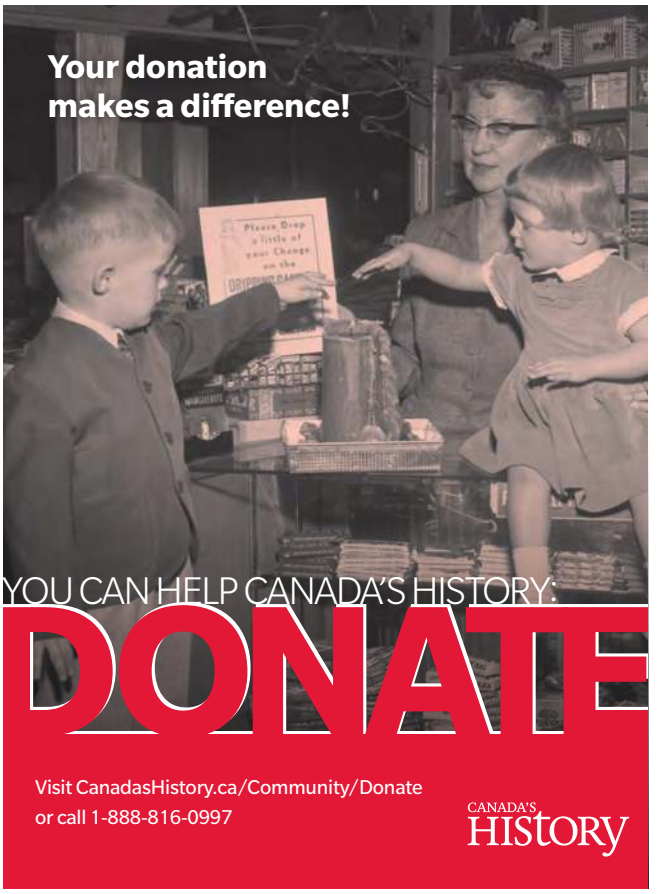
**Charlotte Gray** is the author of ten acclaimed books of literary non-fiction, including most recently *The Promise of Canada: People and Ideas that have Shaped Our Country*. She advocated for Sir John A. on CBC Television's 2004 production "The Greatest Canadian."

**Lee Maracle** is a Sto:lo poet and author who teaches in the Centre for Indigenous Studies at the University of Toronto, where she is also mentor for Aboriginal students.

**Brooke Campbell** is the inaugural Nobleman Scholar at Canada's History Society, where she works with the web and programs staff to promote history education and storytelling.

**Kaitlin Vitt's** book *Planted: Stories From Manitoba's Natural World* made McNally Robinson's bestsellers list in 2017. She is the content coordinator at Canada's History Society.

Check out more articles, videos and podcasts online at CanadasHistory.ca

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CANADA'S HISTORY

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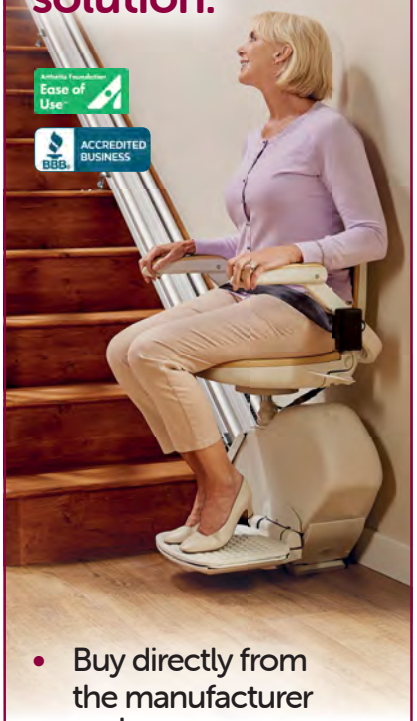


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# Moment in time

I write in connection with the article "Eleven Days Over Death" (*The Beaver*, Winter 1960). The article, found online at CanadasHistory.ca/Archive, describes the loss by fire of a tug, *Speed II*, while towing a barge across Great Bear Lake from Fort Franklin (now Deline), Northwest Territories, to Cameron Bay, in what is now Nunavut, in October 1933. The skipper was Vic Ingraham, after whom the Ingraham Trail, the highway from Yellowknife to Tibbitt Lake, Northwest Territories, was named.

My father, Neil McKechnie, was a friend of Ingraham. In July of 1951, they met for lunch in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. My father was delayed and arrived late. When he returned to his hotel at the end of the day, the desk clerk handed him both his room key and a package.

In it was a gold Gruen pocket watch (pictured) with a note that said, "Next time ... don't be late! Vic." The face of the watch is surrounded by gold nuggets, the back is covered with nuggets, and a nugget forms every second link of the chain. On the inside of the back cover is inscribed, "NSM, from Vic Ingraham, July 28, 1951."

*Cam McKechnie*
*Vancouver*

### Understanding history

I want to extend my thanks to you for the very informative special issue on Treaties and the Treaty Relationship. I found it to be so valuable that I have read virtually every article several times, given the rich content. Without doubt I have a much better understanding of the complex topic.

*Raymond Currie*
*Project Coordinator, Circles for Reconciliation*
*Winnipeg*

*Editor's note: This was a special project by Canada's History Society aimed at educators and secondary school students and was not a regular issue of* Canada's History *magazine. You can download a copy at CanadasHistory.ca/Treaties.*

### Life in colour

The colourized photos in "Grey War No More" in the October-November 2018 issue of *Canada's History* connect us to Canadians at war in a deeply personal way.

The unidentified ambulance driver with the confident smile on page thirty-nine is Vancouver's Grace MacPherson, one of the first women in the city to buy her own car. As a nineteen-year-old, she sent letters in 1914 to the Canadian War Office and the British Red Cross asking to become an ambulance driver. She was flatly rejected.

The carnage at the Battle of the Somme in France changed everything. Male ambulance drivers were needed at the front, so MacPherson and other women were soon transporting wounded Canadians from Vimy, France, to hospitals at Étaples. She became one of the Voluntary Aid Detachment's best drivers and was an ace at looking after her Canadian-made McLaughlin Buick. A century later, MacPherson's caring and heroic legacy continues to inspire.

*Mark Forsythe*
*Fort Langley, B.C.*

During the fur trade era, outposts regularly received "packets" of correspondence. Email your comments to editors@CanadasHistory.ca or write to Canada's History, Bryce Hall Main Floor, 515 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3B 2E9 Canada.

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CANADA'S HISTORY

HISTORY MAKERS

# Canada's canvas

Students create collage to highlight 150 years of Canada's history. *by Marianne Helm*

If you were asked to paint one moment in the history of Canada, what would it be?

Students in Vulcan, Alberta, were asked to do just that, and their final creation — a chronological collage — will leave a lasting legacy for generations to see.

One hundred and fifty students, from kindergarten to grade twelve, were assigned to paint one year in Canada's history as part of a Canada 150 project. Each student had to learn about their year, select one event they felt was important, and depict it in paint on a postcard-sized canvas. The final project was put together and exhibited for residents of Vulcan County to see.

"It was a way for the kids to not only research history but to be a part in making history," said Carmen Pelletier, the project's organizer and videographer.

Events highlighted by the children include the creation of Statistics Canada in 1971, the passing of legislation for the goods and services tax in 1990, and the Tragically Hip's final tour in 2016.

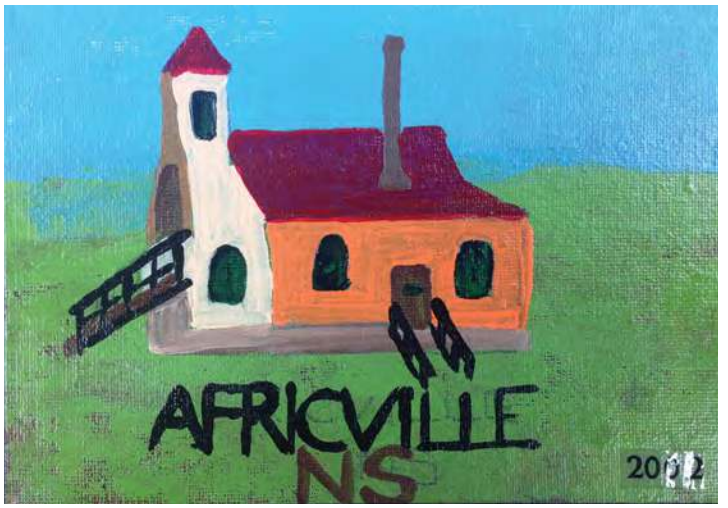
The Nine in a Line Creative Arts Society provided the students with art classes and assistance at the Healy Heritage Art Centre. Once completed, the pieces of art were mounted chronologically onto two large backdrops.

The final installation, entitled Legacy Canada, was unveiled on December 30, 2017, at the Vulcan Legion and is now displayed at the Vulcan and District Historical Society Museum.

"To get where we are going, it is important to remember where we came from," said Pelletier. "Every new generation has something to learn from the previous one, and through this project we involved many different perspectives on what it means to be Canadian."

History Makers is an ongoing celebration of community-based history initiatives across Canada. The Legacy Canada project was shortlisted for the Governor General's History Award for Excellence in Community Programming.

MASON DODDS / GLACIER VALLEY PHOTOGRAPHY



Through art, students highlighted notable events from Canada's first 150 years. Carmen Pelletier organized the project.

MASON DODDS / GLACIER VALLEY PHOTOGRAPHY - FESTIVAL DU VOYAGEUR

BY THE NUMBERS

# Festival du Voyageur

The largest winter festival in Western Canada is celebrating its fiftieth year. Festival du Voyageur takes place in Saint Boniface, Winnipeg's French quarter, and promotes French-Canadian culture. Georges and Anita Forest were the festival's first "official voyageurs," dressing in historical clothing everywhere they went to promote the event. The giant winter party celebrates voyageur, Métis, and Indigenous histories and features traditional food, live music in outdoor tents, and snow sculptures by international artists.

**700**

Litres of maple syrup used each year at the festival for maple taffy, a sweet treat made by pouring hot syrup on snow, placing a popsicle stick at one end, and then rolling up the syrup as it cools.

**1972**

The year Léo La Tuque – a human-sized hat wearing boots and a ceinture fléchée (arrow sash) – became the official mascot.

Height in metres of a 1988 snowman – the tallest snow sculpture made for the festival.

**15.24**

Number of volunteers who help to run the festival.

**1,100**

**93,400**

Number of festival visitors in 2018. More than seventy-five thousand people attended the first festival in 1970.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

# The Tale of Mickey the Beaver

An eleven-year-old girl recounts how she raised a beaver from a kit. *by Kaitlin Vitt*

Mickey the Beaver came into the life of Doris Forbes and her parents in 1939. High school student Jean Yuill found the kit on a sidewalk in Red Deer, Alberta, and happened to bring him to the nearby Forbes home.

The family nursed the injured kit back to health, raising him from when he was only twenty-five centimetres long until he was more than a metre in length.

Mickey would come when called by name and would go for swims in the nearby creek, always following the family home. He'd even make dams out of slippers in their home — after the family trained him to stop gnawing at the furniture.

When Doris Forbes was sick, Mickey would go to her bedroom every day to visit — the beaver even caught whooping cough from the young girl. The two were inseparable; Mickey was Doris's best friend.

"He's the best pet I ever had, and I love him with all my heart," she said.

When "The Tale of Mickey the Beaver" (*The Beaver,* December 1941) was published, the Forbes had been

A. KEEN

**Opposite page: Mickey licks melted licorice off a tree for a photo op. He only cut down trees at night, when it was too dark to photograph. Above top: Mickey, aged four months, gets a snack from his friend. Bottom: Mickey sits on the sofa while Doris reads about his pals in a book.**

raising Mickey for more than two years. This is just one of the stories you'll find in our online archive of *The Beaver*, *Canada's History*, and *Kayak* magazines. Using the new online search function, search "Mickey the Beaver" to see even more photos of Doris and her furry friend.

The Canada's History Archive featuring *The Beaver* was made possible with the generous support of the Hudson's Bay Company History Foundation. Visit **CanadasHistory.ca/Archive** to read ninety-plus years of stories.

TOP: WENDELL CHAPMAN. BOTTOM: HENRY MAR. RIGHT: COURTESY OF SATWINDER KAUR BAINS

HISTORY MAKERS

# The rights fight

Exhibition explores South Asians' long struggle for equality in Canada. *by Marianne Helm*

South Asians who immigrated to Canada in the early twentieth century often faced discrimination when they arrived in British Columbia. Many had their rights suppressed and their voices silenced.

However, a recent exhibition about the four-decade fight by South Asians in British Columbia to win the right to vote has given a voice to the members of the community and is reinforcing the community's place in the history of Canada.

(Dis)Enfranchisement 1907–1947: The Forty-Year Struggle for the Vote highlighted the experiences of South Asian immigrants on Canada's west coast. The exhibition ran from February 2016 to June 2018 at the Sikh Heritage Museum in the Gur Sikh Temple National Historic Site in Abbotsford, B.C.

**Satwinder Kaur Bains (right) organized an exhibition about South Asian immigrants on Canada's west coast.**

"The inspiration behind the project was to provide the research on South Asian history that is largely missing or omitted from the Canadian historical record in terms of challenges and successes in nation-building," said Satwinder Kaur Bains, director of the South Asian Studies Institute of the University of the Fraser Valley and the exhibit's organizer.

Using personal accounts, newspaper clippings, photographs, and copies of travel documents, the display offered a closer look into the historical policies and laws that discriminated against South Asians. Those included racist rules such as the "continuous journey" regulation that specifically targeted emigrants from India; the law that required South Asian immigrants to possess two hundred dollars upon entry into Canada, compared to the twenty-dollar requirement for European immigrants; and rules that restricted the immigration of women and children.

Bains said that approximately 7,500 people — including 3,000 students — have seen the display. While the exhibition has ended, the information it presented can be explored digitally. See CanadasHistory.ca/DisEnfranchisement.

History Makers is an ongoing celebration of community-based history initiatives across Canada. The (Dis)Enfranchisement 1907-1947 project was shortlisted for the Governor General's History Award for Excellence in Community Programming.

American soldiers in Vietnam run toward a helicopter in 1965.

YOUR STORY

# One for the Boys

How a Canadian Vietnam veteran sacrificed all in order to win greater respect for his brothers in arms. *by Cathy Saint John*

He was a young Newfoundlander and a patriotic Canadian who volunteered with the United States Army to fight in Vietnam at a time when thousands of young Americans were fleeing to Canada to avoid the draft.

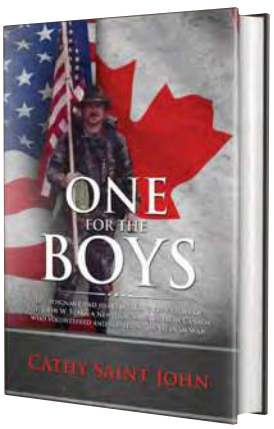
He served with distinction during his two tours, spending eighteen months as an elite special forces soldier. And, like many other Vietnam veterans, he was scorned upon his return from Vietnam by a misinformed, angry public.

Haunted by memories of war and by the traumatic reception he received, he realized that many of his fellow soldier-brothers were also struggling after their return from the war. In 1982, he launched a cross-America walk to raise awareness of Vietnam veterans.

His name was Sergeant John W. Blake, U.S. Special Forces N/75th Ranger, of the 173rd Airborne Regiment — and he was my brother.

I'll never forget that day in 1968 when my only brothers, John, then nineteen, and David, then seventeen, said they were going to enlist. Canada was not at war with Vietnam, but it did support the United States and South Vietnam by providing military supplies, materials, and so on. Both John and David believed deeply in the need to stop the growing Communist threat in Asia.

Their decision to enlist would change our little family forever. Our mother retreated into a depression for three days before finally surfacing from her bedroom. During that time, we all felt a cloud of sadness hovering over our little home. But it was tempered with pride, because our boys were about to do just as our deceased father, a Great War veteran, had done — journey to a faraway land to fight in a war that was intended to help to free the oppressed.




The book *One for the Boys*, by Cathy Saint John.

David trained and served as a mechanic, working on helicopters in Vietnam, but John — he was a warrior. He spent his time in the war zone, doing extremely dangerous work that brought him into direct contact with the enemy and with the many atrocities of war.

John lost far too many good friends in Vietnam. A gifted writer, he used his poetry and journals to memorialize the lives of his fellow soldiers. Thoughts of those brave men followed John every day of his life.

In 1972, John, like many other soldiers, returned home suffering from undiagnosed

ALAMY

post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). He moved to the United States in 1976 and quickly realized that his fellow veterans were suffering, too.

The general public had little sympathy for the Vietnam veterans who struggled with PTSD, until they began to fill American emergency rooms. All of them were suffering from the same symptoms. By 1982 — the year the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall was unveiled in Washington, D.C. — John had had enough.

He headed to Seattle, where he launched a one-man march across America to raise awareness of Vietnam veterans. Carrying the American flag and dressed in authentic combat gear, he set out on the more than 5,100-kilometre journey to the U.S. east coast.

At first, John's appearance along the highways of America seemed to confuse people. Why is he doing this? But with every conversation, and with each visit to a new town, John won over more and more supporters.

Soon, the media were interviewing him. They called him "The Walker," and his path can be traced today by the newspaper coverage that followed his journey. For seven months he walked alone, without an entourage, relying instead on the kindness of strangers and on his Ranger skills, remembering his unit's famous motto: "Rangers lead the way."

John's journey was the first-ever "awareness" walk with the American flag. Following the completion of this mission, he became a veterans' advocate, volunteering tirelessly for almost a decade for the rights of his fellow Vietnam veterans.

Throughout this time, our family knew that John was struggling with his own PTSD. We also knew that John wanted to come home, and to grow old on a mountain overlooking the ocean; but he needed to stay in the United States, where he could receive medical intervention for his PTSD.

On February 13, 1996, the call we had all dreaded finally came. A voice over the phone from Hilo, Hawaii, informed me that our brother had died. After years of struggling with his PTSD, he had died by his own hand.

We were devastated, but we were not entirely surprised, because John had prepared us somewhat for the end of his life's journey. Yet nothing prepared us for the devastation that occurred when we brought his remains home to Newfoundland for a military burial, which was his final request.

That story — a government's brutal rejection of John's wish to be buried in the only military cemetery in St. John's, Newfoundland, the Field of Honour within Mount Pleasant Cemetery — is told in full in my new book, *One for the Boys*.

We never dreamt that a simple request for a burial would trigger an emotional five-year fight with the Department of Veterans Affairs. It was inconceivable to our family that John, an honourably discharged and decorated Vietnam veteran, a Canadian, and the son of a First World War veteran, would be denied burial in a Canadian military cemetery. But it happened, and it was a cruel injustice. Fast-forward to now, twenty-three years later, and tears still sting my eyes when I think about how much John had given to this world and how his homeland, Canada, had denied him his final request to rest in peace here.

Top: John Blake, left, circa 1970–71, stands in Vietnam with friends and fellow soldiers Michael Swisley, centre, and Charlie Cash, right.

Left: John Blake prepares in Seattle for the start of his 1982 walk across the United States.

My family and I now recognize that it is necessary to share John's story in the hope that it will help the public to better understand the impacts of PTSD and that it will lead to increased support and treatment for the afflicted and their families. We also hope that John's story will help to clarify why too many military personnel and civilians choose to die as a result of their struggles with PTSD. Perhaps his story will help to catch them before they fall.

Writing about my late brother and his extraordinary story was not an easy task. It took a tremendous amount of time, sadness, tears, and courage to journey into John W. Blake's struggles and triumphs and then, finally, to share his story with readers. I could have avoided going through this emotional pain, but then I would never have fully known a man that no one should ever forget.

The greatest compliment I can give to my late brother is to have written his story and to have gotten it right. It has taken two decades of writing, research, interviews, and editing to succeed.

Read a short review of the book at CanadasHistory.ca/OneForTheBoys.

COURTESY CATHY SAINT JOHN

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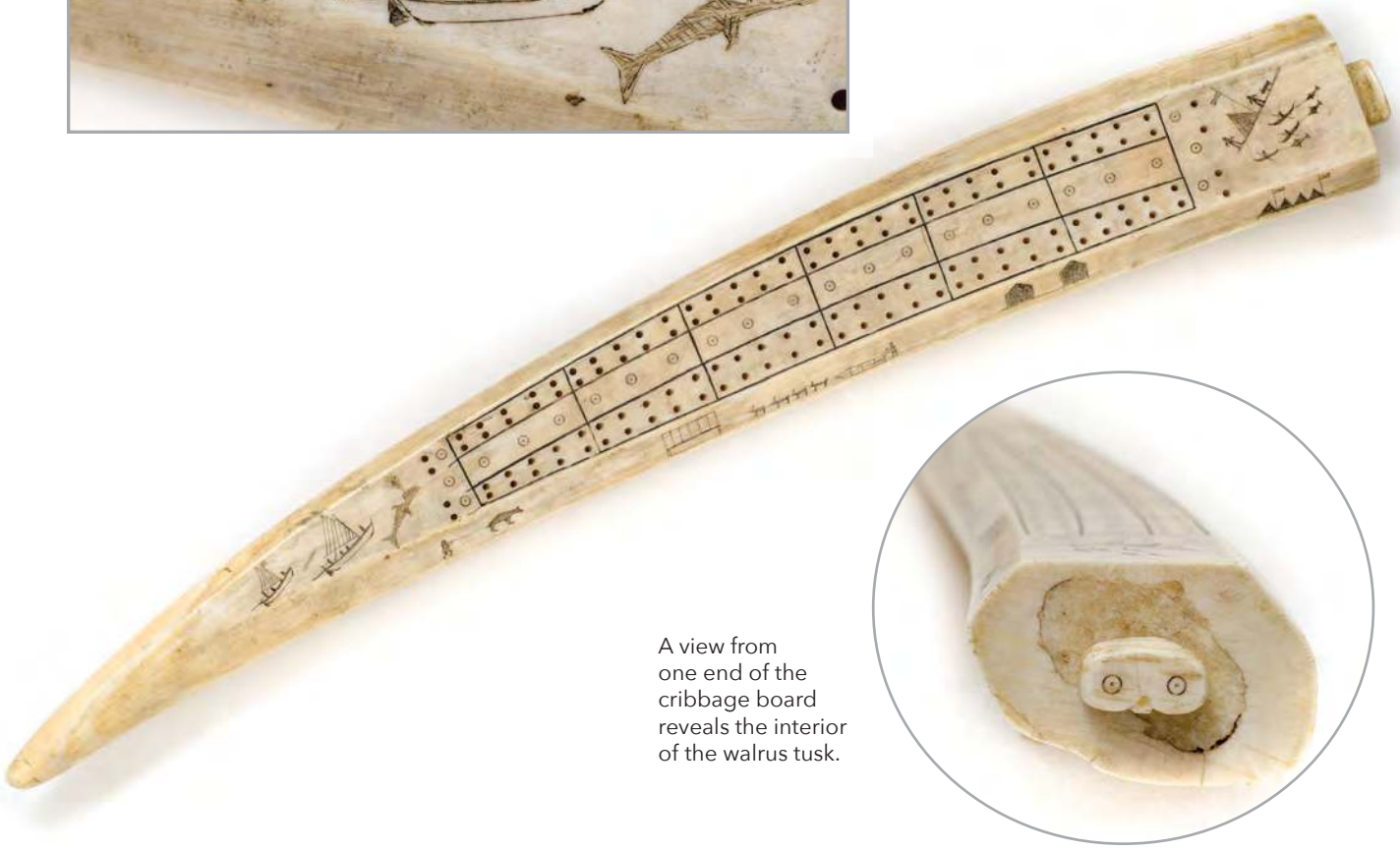
Designs on the cribbage board include a depiction of people travelling in sailboats.



A view from one end of the cribbage board reveals the interior of the walrus tusk.

# Cribbage Board

Tales and Treasures from the rich legacy of the Hudson's Bay Company

Cribbage was a popular game amongst early explorers and whalers, and it was quickly introduced to the Inuit through trade-related interactions. The HBC Museum Collection has several cribbage boards made from walrus tusks that were likely produced specifically for trade or as souvenirs. Unfortunately, we do not know who made this early twentieth-century cribbage board, nor even the community the artist was from. The designs have been scrimshawed into the ivory by incising designs and filling them with ink. Some of the cribbage boards in the collection were made by Europeans, but this one has a distinctive Inuit flair. The scenes depict hunting, travelling by dog team, boat, and kayak, and what appear to be trading posts or European-Canadian encampments.

*— Amelia Fay, curator of the HBC Collection at the Manitoba Museum*

ARTIFACT FROM THE MANITOBA MUSEUM (HBC 38-37) / PHOTO BY ANDREW WORKMAN

HUDSON'S BAY

*The Beaver* magazine was originally founded as a Hudson's Bay Company publication in 1920. To read stories from past issues, go to **CanadasHistory.ca/Archive**. To explore the history of the Hudson's Bay Company, go to **hbcheritage.ca**, or follow HBC's Twitter and Instagram feeds at **@HBCHeritage.**

Sir John A. Macdonald, January 1868.

# THE TRIALS OF JOHN A.

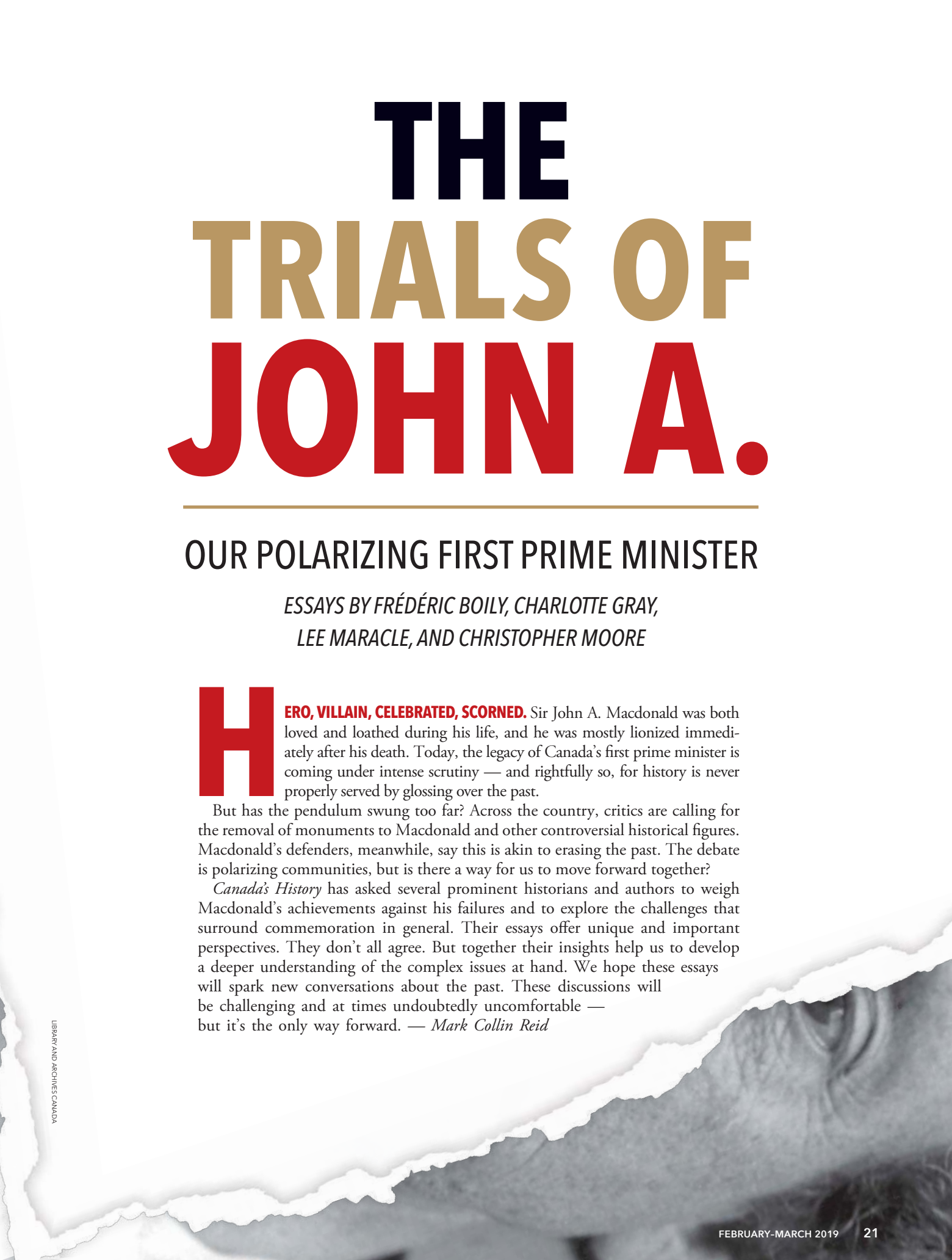
## OUR POLARIZING FIRST PRIME MINISTER

*ESSAYS BY FRÉDÉRIC BOILY, CHARLOTTE GRAY, LEE MARACLE, AND CHRISTOPHER MOORE*

**HERO, VILLAIN, CELEBRATED, SCORNED.** Sir John A. Macdonald was both loved and loathed during his life, and he was mostly lionized immediately after his death. Today, the legacy of Canada's first prime minister is coming under intense scrutiny — and rightfully so, for history is never properly served by glossing over the past.

But has the pendulum swung too far? Across the country, critics are calling for the removal of monuments to Macdonald and other controversial historical figures. Macdonald's defenders, meanwhile, say this is akin to erasing the past. The debate is polarizing communities, but is there a way for us to move forward together?

*Canada's History* has asked several prominent historians and authors to weigh Macdonald's achievements against his failures and to explore the challenges that surround commemoration in general. Their essays offer unique and important perspectives. They don't all agree. But together their insights help us to develop a deeper understanding of the complex issues at hand. We hope these essays will spark new conversations about the past. These discussions will be challenging and at times undoubtedly uncomfortable — but it's the only way forward. — *Mark Collin Reid*



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This statue of Sir John A. Macdonald in Montreal's Place du Canada was vandalized in August 2018, the third time in less than a year.

# FROM PROTECTOR TO HANGMAN

## MACDONALD'S REPUTATION IN FRENCH CANADA SHIFTED WITH HIS POLITICAL DECISIONS.

*BY FRÉDÉRIC BOILY, TRANSLATED BY NATALIE BOISVERT*

**ON OCTOBER 6, 2018, THE STATUE** of John A. Macdonald in downtown Montreal's Place du Canada square was once again vandalized, this time by "a group of anonymous local anti-colonial, anti-racist, anti-capitalist activists," according to the *Montreal Gazette*. The statue had been drenched in paint earlier that year, and it was beheaded in 1992, in all likelihood to protest the failure of the Charlottetown Accord.

Despite the Quebec backdrop, it would appear that the latest incident was not related to Macdonald's treatment of either French Canadians or Quebecers but, rather, was motivated by his actions against Canada's Indigenous peoples, who remain animated by a painful history tainted by Macdonald's legacy. To francophones, on the other hand, he is a mostly forgotten or indifferent figure. In Canada's early days, however, French Canadians regarded him rather highly.

Relations between French Canadians and John A. Macdonald were indeed rather positive during the first twenty years of a nascent Canada. His Conservatives found more allies than opponents among francophones, especially within the Roman Catholic Church, which had supported Confederation in 1867. At the time, many French-Canadian Catholics were alarmed by radical liberals — "Les Rouges," spearheaded by brothers Antoine-Aimé and Éric Dorion — who were considered by many to be extremist opponents of the church. By contrast, for French-Canadian Catholics, Confederation as championed by John A. Macdonald and George-Étienne Cartier seemed the best protection against annexation to the American republic. In

THE CANADIAN PRESS/GRAHAM HUGHES

this context, Macdonald may not have been hailed altogether as a saviour, but, to be sure, he was seen as a much lesser evil than the prospect of being dissolved into American culture.

In the 1960 National Film Board documentary *Le chanoine Lionel Groulx, historien*, the nationalist historian Lionel Groulx recounted a story from his childhood. When mock elections were staged by the pupils in his primary school, he played the role of Macdonald. He recalls proudly saying these lines as a schoolboy: "We are the sons of Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir George-Étienne Cartier. We shall not back down before the sons of Dorion and George Brown." The young Groulx, it would seem, represented quite accurately the character of the Tory leader as imagined by French-Canadian Catholics.

Nevertheless, it is around this same time that relations between Macdonald's Conservatives and French Canadians started to sour somewhat, as the latter began to doubt Macdonald's commitment to French rights. Starting in 1871, according to Susan Mann Trofimenkoff in her 1986 book *Visions nationales: Une histoire du Québec*, the province's ultramontanists — those who saw the church as supreme over the rest of society — pressed Macdonald's government to protect Acadian rights in New Brunswick by disallowing a provincial law intended to stop funding Catholic schools in the province. Despite pressure from a number of prominent Quebec legislators, Macdonald refused to disallow the law, fearing even greater opposition from his own party's Orangemen, anti-Catholic conservatives originating in sectarian Ireland. To this end, Macdonald argued that Confederation was founded upon the recognition of cultural and national distinctions among provinces as well as the principle of provincial autonomy, a position he had held even before 1867.

Fathers of Confederation at the Charlottetown Conference, 1864. The partnership of John A. Macdonald, seated on steps, and George-Étienne Cartier, standing to his right holding a top hat, was crucial to the success of Confederation.

Indeed, on February 6, 1865, Macdonald had said in an address to the House of Assembly that the "people of Lower Canada" sought to protect the province's cultural "individuality." This fact made a legislative union between provincial entities impossible, which was an outcome Macdonald likely favoured personally. He used the same argument — the obligation to respect the will of Lower Canada — when the issue of New Brunswick schools was debated in the House of Commons on May 14, 1873. "Lower Canada contained a different race and used a different language. The majority had a religion which was in the minority in the whole Dominion, and they claimed and justly claimed as a protection to them ... that we should not have Legislative Union…." Paradoxically, then, respecting Lower Canada's provincial jurisdiction prevented Macdonald from supporting French Canadians elsewhere in the country.

In fairness to Macdonald, he was in a difficult position. On one side, French Canadians outside Quebec demanded that the federal government use its power of disallowance to revoke provincial laws that limited their rights, as it had seen fit to do under different circumstances. On the other side, Macdonald faced considerable resistance from the provinces, especially Ontario, that forcefully defended their own jurisdiction against any manner of federal centralism. Indeed, this was a time when power relations between the central government and its federated entities were in a process of redefinition, a process that favoured increased provincial authority. In this context, it would have been difficult for Macdonald and the Conservatives — had they been so inclined — to fully and completely defend French Canadians outside Quebec, lest the federal government be charged with an illegitimate intrusion into provincial

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Métis leader Louis Riel addresses the court during his trial for treason in Regina, July 1885.

affairs. Thus, while Quebec obtained some acknowledgement of its distinction, this was done, as historian Jean-Charles Bonenfant has written, "with little regard for the fate of French minorities in other provinces."

Nevertheless, Macdonald held French Canada in relatively high regard, which might have been due to the Quebec contingent of his entourage. Indeed, he surrounded himself with effective and talented French-Canadian colleagues, starting with Cartier. Their number also included Étienne Parent, a highly regarded intellectual who would become undersecretary of state and who had, according to historian Patrice Dutil, a profound influence on Macdonald's perceptions of Quebec, as well as Robert Bouchette, the deputy minister of customs.

Whatever goodwill might have existed, however, would collapse irremediably in the wake of the execution of Métis leader Louis Riel. Now considered a Father of Confederation, after the Northwest Resistance of 1885 Riel was branded a traitor by the Macdonald government and sentenced to hang. Relations between Macdonald and French Canadians, until then positive if not quite cordial, deteriorated to the point of no return. In choosing not to grant Riel amnesty, Macdonald and the Conservatives certainly knew they would precipitate a storm, but they wagered that it would be sudden and brief. The other option, sparing Riel, would have triggered a veritable hurricane in Ontario.

Helping to tip the balance against Riel was the fact that, until that time, French Canadians had shown little regard for the Métis. This led Macdonald to believe that his image might emerge somewhat tarnished from the episode but not completely destroyed. To the contrary, French Canadians found in Riel's hanging proof that one of theirs was killed by an Anglo-Saxon government resolutely against francophones. The leader of Quebec's Parti national, Honoré Mercier, seized upon this issue in his party's successful effort to dislodge the provincial Conservatives. After the Riel affair, John A. Macdonald and the Conservatives had become "the party of the noose" in the eyes of French-Canadian Catholics. It would take considerable effort for the Tories to regain the favour of the Quebec electorate.

This perhaps explains why, when the time came to celebrate Canada's 150th anniversary in 2017, Macdonald's role did not figure prominently in Quebec. Certain commentators have noted that Hector-Louis Langevin, a francophone, unjustly carries the blame for the actions of his leader, who was the person truly responsible for residential schools. (In June 2017 Prime Minister Justin Trudeau cited the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada as he stripped Langevin's name from the Ottawa building housing the Prime Minister's Office and the Privy Council Office.) Macdonald is remembered as a somewhat dark figure. But he is someone, because of the role he played in the foundation of Canada, whose monuments should remain standing.

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This statue of Canada's first prime minister was removed from the grounds outside Victoria City Hall days after the city council voted to take it down.

CP IMAGES

# WE NEED TO WIDEN OUR VIEWS

## UNDERSTANDING CANADIAN HISTORY REQUIRES BOTH CONTEXT AND A SENSE OF PROPORTION.

*BY CHARLOTTE GRAY*

**I'M GLAD WE ARE HAVING THIS DEBATE.** I'm happy that Canadians are being jolted out of historical amnesia. As we argue about what versions of the past we want to tell, we are being forced to recognize that today has been shaped by yesterday.

But I'm not happy that these discussions are drenched in moral judgments about our forebears, without any acknowledgement that our predecessors lived in a world radically different from ours — different in ideologies, challenges, constraints, and goals. Individuals are being ripped out of context, and their characters trashed, with no attempt to understand the past on its own terms.

I'm not advocating that every single historical figure should be revered as legendary. But surely we can have a sense of proportion about whose achievements still merit respect and whose legacy is too toxic to swallow.

Let's start with the recent shredding of Sir John A. Macdonald's reputation. There are proposals that his name should be removed from Ontario public schools. The Canadian Historical Association's prestigious Sir John A. Macdonald Prize has been rebranded as the CHA's Best Scholarly Book in Canadian History prize. Last summer, one statue of Macdonald was removed from outside Victoria's city hall while two more — one in Winnipeg, a second in Montreal — were defaced.

Macdonald's offence was his role in the residential school system — a system that had been established before he became prime minister, that peaked about forty years after his death, and that continued under eighteen more prime ministers before the last school finally closed in 1996. As the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada reported, the system was a catastrophe for Indigenous peoples in Canada: Their children were horrifically abused, their cultures destroyed, their communities shattered.

## Instead of rushing to judgment, what about widening the perspective?

Yet the issue, I would argue, is not who to blame but, rather, how did this happen? How can we understand the past, where people acted in ways that today we consider shocking? Instead of rushing to judgment in a triumphant display of wokeness, what about widening the perspective to see what was actually going on back then?

As I watched television clips from Victoria of Macdonald's statue being carted away, I noticed a ridiculous irony. Fixed to the wall on the other side of the doors was the city's coat of arms. It is laden with colonial symbols: Two blond angels represent colonization and civilization, with an all-seeing eye, the dove of peace, and a crusader helmet to represent Christianity. As if the name of British Columbia's capital and the Union Jack embedded in the provincial flag weren't enough, this coat of arms hints that the British Empire lives on. The coat of arms reflects the beliefs with which Macdonald was raised — Britain was the motherland, Christian evangelism was used to justify oppression, and now-discredited theories of racial hierarchies held sway.

Sir John A. was a man of his time, but he was also a powerful leader. He moulded a handful of shabby British colonies into a new country and built a coast-to-coast railway to bind it together. He propelled the new Dominion towards autonomy. Without Macdonald, would there even have been a Canada?

The Fathers of Confederation developed a radical new idea on which to establish this country — a compromise between English-speaking and French-speaking settlers. In keeping with attitudes of the time, they failed to include First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples in this bargain, and Canadians as well as Indigenous communities have been the poorer for that omission ever since.

Yet the idea of a nation based on political rather than ethnic links would, in the future, allow Canada to become the beacon of pluralism that our current prime minister loves to celebrate.

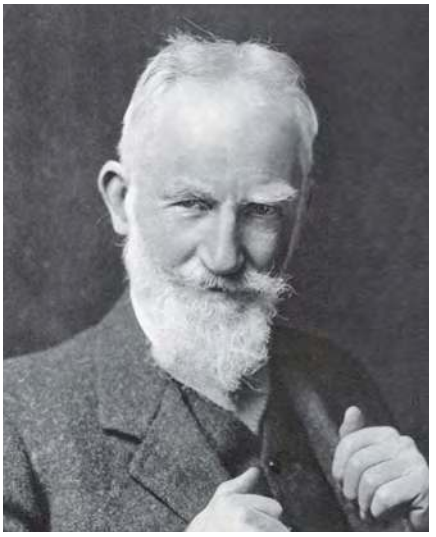
I can't help wondering why our first prime minister had to be banished from Victoria's city hall while the province continues to embrace peachy-cheeked angels and crusader armour.

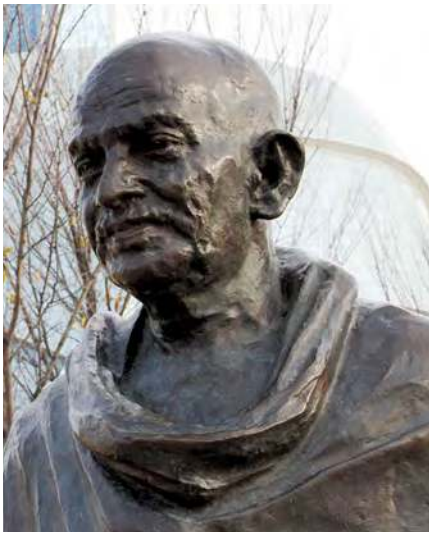
The crucial role that the resourceful, risk-taking, pragmatic Macdonald played in shaping this country cannot be expunged from our history as briskly as his statue. Meanwhile, in a province with some of the largest non-settler,

Above: The flag of British Columbia contains a Union Jack – a reminder of the province's colonial past.

Left: A vandalized statue of South African politician Cecil Rhodes is removed from the University of Cape Town in 2015 in response to anti-colonialism protests. Rhodes, who died in 1902, was an advocate of British colonialism. He founded the southern African territory of Rhodesia, which was named after him in 1895, and also set up the provisions of the Rhodes Scholarship, which is funded by his estate.

LEFT: ROGER SEDRES / ALAMY; RIGHT: 123RF





Left to right: George Bernard Shaw, Nellie McClung, and a statue of Mohandas K. Gandhi outside of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg. Shaw and McClung supported eugenics, while Gandhi was accused of anti-black racism.

non-Christian communities in the country, a bunch of outdated symbols are still allowed to tell a story of white supremacy and racial bigotry.

Sir John A. Macdonald is far from the only national leader under attack these days. Statues and busts in public places explicitly celebrate their subjects. The debate about which historical figures should be toppled from their plinths is happening in several countries that are reframing their national narratives.

Sometimes the purges are easy to justify. Depictions of brutal dictators rarely survive the tyrants' deaths; you won't find monuments to Adolf Hitler anywhere in Germany, and Antonio de Oliveira Salazar is invisible in Portugal. There are apparently remote Russian fields crammed with banished statues of Stalin. (However, on a recent trip to St. Petersburg, I noticed a monumental statue of Lenin, who, despite unleashing violence and purges, has escaped obliteration because he overthrew Tsarist oppression.)

Equally easy to understand are the re-evaluations of the contributions made by some men who were eulogized for decades after their deaths, such as Cecil Rhodes in Britain and some leaders in the southern United States. The most compelling argument to remove their statues is that the subjects' whole careers were dedicated to upholding white supremacy, as imperialists (in the case of Rhodes) or defenders of the institution of slavery (in the case of Confederate heroes). I am happy to see their lumps of masonry sent into exile. It is also instructive to see how, in some instances, history spoke to the present loudly and clearly. In Charlottesville, Virginia, the removal of an equestrian monument to Confederate leader and Civil War hero Robert E. Lee sparked an ugly outburst from alt-right protesters shouting racist slogans.

But other, more surprising figures have been caught up in these debates. Mohandas K. Gandhi seems an unlikely symbol of racial arrogance — Nelson Mandela once described the Indian leader as "the best hope for future race relations." Yet in 2016 the University of Ghana removed a statue of Gandhi from its campus after an online campaign (#Gandhimustfall) charged him with racism against black Africans. His extraordinary achievement in campaigning for the British departure from India with non-violent protest was not enough to save him.

At this point, I ask myself, can anybody survive scrutiny? Which historical figure is completely free of flaws? Some of the most celebrated heroes of progressive causes, among them Canadian suffragist Nellie McClung and British author George Bernard Shaw, endorsed eugenics. How do we balance our admiration for some of our predecessors' ideas against our abhorrence of others among their beliefs?

I suggest that the only way is to widen the lens when reviewing historical figures. Don't banish Sir John A. Macdonald in an Orwellian attempt to clean up the past. Instead, present him in all his complexity, as both a nineteenth-century patriarch and, to quote the title of Richard Gwyn's biography, "the man who made us." Don't eliminate him from view. Instead, amplify the information provided on the plaques and inscriptions that accompany his monuments. Yes, Macdonald was implicated in the cruel treatment of Indigenous peoples, and it is important to recognize that. But that's only one aspect of a substantial legacy.

We need to be more tolerant of the moral failings of our predecessors — not as an act of charity to them but as an act of charity to ourselves. Our own unconscious assumptions and cultural habits are doubtless just as impregnated with biases as theirs were. The next generation is already berating mine for our wanton destruction of the environment, for our needless cruelty to factory-farmed animals, for our blind embrace of consumerism. If we want the future to respect our moment in history, perhaps we should expand our knowledge of the past before we launch into spasms of outrage.

LEFT: ALAMY; CENTRE: GLENBOW MUSEUM; RIGHT: ALAMY

The Mohawk warrior flag flutters over an overpass on Highway 401 after the Mohawks successfully shut the road down as part of a protest near Deseronto, Ontario, on June 29, 2007.

CP PHOTO/TOM HANSON

# HONOUR INDIGENOUS HISTORY

## CELEBRATING THE CULTURE AND COURAGE OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IS A KEY STEP TOWARDS RECONCILIATION.

*BY LEE MARACLE*

**THE ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' FEDERATION OF ONTARIO** voted in the summer of 2017 to have Sir John A. Macdonald's name removed from all public schools in the province. Advanced as part of efforts to reconcile with Indigenous people, this recommendation reminds me of the controversial objections, beginning more than two decades ago, to the use of Indigenous names for sports teams and their mascots as well as for other products.

At first, I did not support the struggle to stop using Indigenous names this way. Then I read an article with the opening "Ride a Jew — a Jew can really take a beating." I was horrified. What was wrong with this writer? At the end of the article, the writer said he took these words right out of an ad for a Jeep Cherokee and replaced "Cherokee" with "Jew." Why was the revised version so horrifying? *Is* it normal to disrespect Indigenous people? What is wrong with this picture? I asked myself.

Some Indigenous people have weighed in on the subject and lined up with ETFO, urging that the names of schools bearing Macdonald's name be changed. For sure, the issue is a hot one, and there has been resistance to the idea of dropping his name. The argument in favour of doing so is simple: We should not celebrate those who are responsible for the suffering of Indigenous people.

I have questions about this approach. It is true that Indigenous people suffered a great deal because of Macdonald's decision to go along with Egerton Ryerson, the founder of Ontario's education system. Ryerson said Indigenous children were not fit for an academic education and should instead be confined to residential schools that provided industrial training.

The creation of residential schools is not Macdonald's only sin. The expansion of Canada past Ontario and Quebec required the quelling of the Manitoba Métis and of their Red River Resistance led by Louis Riel, a sin that is high up on my list. As the daughter of a Métis mother, I am not a fan of Macdonald, the man responsible for Riel's hanging. Yet I am uncertain that changing names on buildings is going to force Canada to honour its agreements with the Métis, which would involve truly meaningful change. If the idea is to start the conversation about Sir John's misguided thinking, we may want to begin with the writings of Métis author Marilyn Dumont before making any hard and fast decisions. Her poem "Letter to Sir John A. Macdonald" opens with the lines: "Dear John: I'm still here and halfbreed,/ after all these years/ you're dead, funny thing."

Reconciliation is not just about making things emotionally comfortable for Indigenous people. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) issued ninety-four calls to action. Removing Macdonald's name from public buildings is not one of them. It seems as though the reconciliation aspect most attended to is not the calls to action related to economic equality, which would have the most practical impact, but rather the making of emotional apologies.

One of the calls to action is to put up monuments to Indigenous people — the heroes and the survivors. Is erasing Macdonald going to reveal Indigenous heroes? I think not. Changing the name on a building is another form of apology with no real punch.

I am cautious as I write this essay. I am aware that the emotional well-being of survivors and their dependants is critical, after all the suffering they have endured.

On the other hand, I wonder if we are losing an opportunity to remember. I am not in favour of getting rid of things. My daughter Columpa C. Bobb, who is a writer, photographer, and actor, agrees with me. She said, "I think we should keep the names and change the plaque." The memorial phrase for the First World War is "Lest we forget." The many cenotaphs and soldiers' statues remind us of the wars in which so many fought and died. Those wars were terrible, but we don't get rid of the war memorials. I worry that, if we erase John A. Macdonald from history, in the not-so-distant future we will forget what happened to Indigenous children at his behest.

Instead, we could put up a plaque on any building bearing his name, explaining his role in forming the residential school system. I would also like someone to explain in these public places how the "Sir" got in front of his name. Without the plaque, we miss a teaching moment.

Niigaan Sinclair, Idle No More organizer and professor of Native Studies at the University of Manitoba, tells us, "schools are perhaps the most important parts of a nation. That's where the most important discussions happen…." What sort of discussion will take place if we remove Macdonald's name? For the first few years we will be reminded that the building once had a different name; then it just may fall into being ignored and forgotten.

If we are going to move toward reconciliation, we should not choose a tactic based on discomfort. Let us work toward honouring the children who went to these schools. Let's put up plaques and monuments to them, rather than taking something else down. Let us explain the dishonourable histories of Macdonald and others as well as the roles they played in fracturing Indigenous communities and destroying our languages by placing us in residential schools. Let us say, "We are not going to go that way again."

The TRC called for the country to honour more Indigenous people. My grandfather, Chief Dan George, is probably the most painted and photographed Indigenous man in Canadian history, but there is no monument to his work toward reconciliation that took place long before the TRC or the closure of the schools. When he was asked to sing at ceremonies for Canada's centennial, he instead requested time to speak; but he was denied. He always talked about the importance of coming together as human beings and was a strong advocate for peace, friendship, justice, and fairness between Indigenous people and Canadians.

The former chair of the TRC, Murray Sinclair, says we should stop arguing about whether schools should be named after Sir John A. Macdonald and start thinking about how to honour overlooked Indigenous heroes. I am up for that.

I am a Sto:lo. Our trickster is a mink. He is a vicious little predator. A little mink can snap the heads of twenty mice in barely the blink of an eye. He can take down a coyote or a wolf. He drinks blood but does not eat the flesh of the wildlife he kills. But we adore him. Once I was wondering about that, and my daughter said, "He is a teacher by negative example. He tells us how not to be."

I think leaving the name and adding a plaque can help to tell us how not to be.

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Children at Fort Simpson Indian Residential School in the Northwest Territories hold letters that spell the word "Goodbye," circa 1922. The trauma of the residential school system created by John A. Macdonald's government continues to affect Indigenous peoples today.

Violent protests have erupted in the southern United States in recent months over efforts to remove statues of Confederate war heroes.

# REMOVING STATUES FAILS TO ADDRESS UNDERLYING INJUSTICE

## WE SHOULD INSTEAD RESTORE HISTORY BY HONOURING ACHIEVEMENTS, RECOGNIZING FLAWS, AND DENOUNCING INJUSTICES.

*BY CHRISTOPHER MOORE*

**FOR THINKING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL STATUES** in public places, the best guide I know is Annette Gordon-Reed. She is both a history professor and a law professor (at Harvard, no less) and is also the winner of a MacArthur "genius grant" and a Pulitzer Prize. Gordon-Reed's best-known research established beyond reasonable doubt the intimate relationship between American founding father Thomas Jefferson and his slave Sally Hemings, the mother of several of his children.

Does Gordon-Reed, herself African-American, believe that Jefferson's staggering hypocrisy — declaring it "self-evident, that all men are created equal," while keeping his own children in bondage — disqualifies him from a place on any pedestal anywhere? Surely she ought to be glad to see Jefferson statues toppled along with those of Confederate generals who fought to maintain slavery?

AP PHOTO/GERRY BROOME

Not at all. "We can distinguish between people who wanted to build the United States of America and people who wanted to destroy it," she said. "It's possible to recognize people's contributions at the same time as recognizing their flaws." Indeed, Gordon-Reed praised the citizens of Charlottesville, Virginia, who in 2017 rallied to protect Jefferson's statue there from the neo-Nazis and racists who tried to claim him as one of their own. The defenders of Jefferson's statue, she said, were upholding the best of his legacy to the United States.

Gordon-Reed's knowledge of Jefferson's failings is profound, but she believes that his declaration of human equality remains a pillar of American democracy. Americans, she declares, can honour the statesman who proclaimed equality, even as they deplore his other traits and practices.

Can we apply a similar rule in Canada? In Montreal, the Mohawk teacher and activist Michael Rice accepts the existence of plaques and statues that honour Governor Paul Chomedey de Maisonneuve for his contributions to founding French Montreal in the 1640s. But, he argues, they should be balanced by some acknowledgment that the Mohawk chiefs whom Maisonneuve killed in the process were honourably defending Rice's ancestors and their homeland. That would be restoring history, not erasing it.

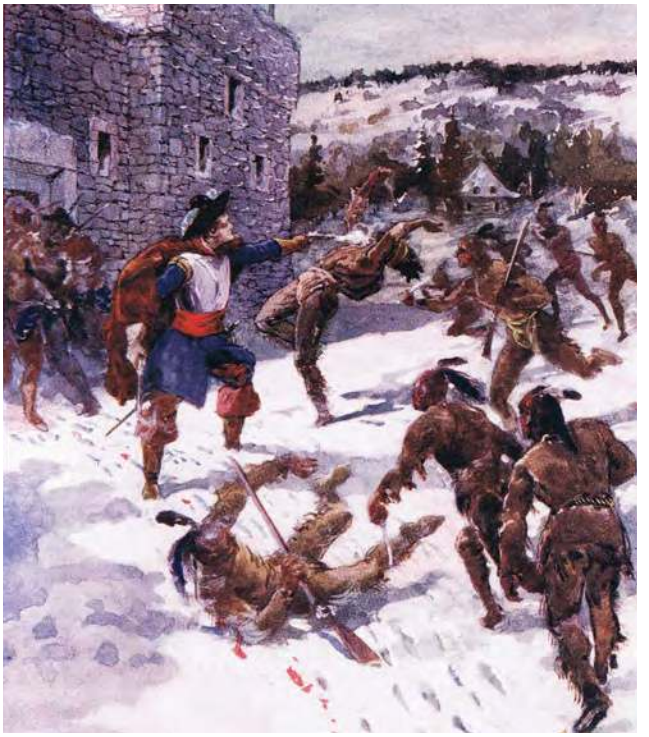
And John A. Macdonald? I've never been keen on the desire for a Canadian "father of his country" to mimic George Washington's role in American legend. Confederation was a collective achievement, and Macdonald (and other prime ministers) are well represented among our statuary. For new statues, I prefer ones like that of poet Al Purdy in Toronto, or musician Gordon Lightfoot in Orillia, Ontario, or the sculptures that honour First Nations history on the west coast. Macdonald's flaws are part of his history. But the statues of him honour significant positive achievements on behalf of Canada.

Macdonald sometimes built better than he knew. He helped to draft Section 91.24 of the *British North America Act*, which binds Canada to a Treaty relationship with First Nations. His *Indian Act* and his role in the starvation and dispossession of First Nations dishonoured that commitment, but the commitment endures; we are all Treaty people. Respectful adherence to the Treaties can be our way forward to reconciliation.

In his failure to maintain Canada's Treaty commitments, Macdonald actually resembles today's Canadians. It is not shameful to respect John A. Macdonald's contribution to the building of Canadian Confederation or his years as prime minister. What would be shameful would be to remove Macdonald statues around the country — without addressing Canada's responsibility for the poverty, dispossession, and alienation of Indigenous peoples that he helped to create and that we maintain.

Macdonald was a politician to his fingertips. In his time, and in defiance of the sharing agreements that were promised when the Treaties were negotiated, Canadian governments with broad popular support dispossessed First Nations of their territories and made it impossible for them to run their own affairs or to generate the revenues they required. When he helped to make starvation into a tool of coercion on the prairies, he was pursuing policies that were accepted by the Canadian electorate of the times — by us, in effect.

Below: In this romanticized 1920 painting, Paul de Chomedy de Maisonneuve "defends his followers" in 1644 from Mohawk attack. Today statues and plaques in Montreal celebrate Maisonneuve as a founder of that city. Montreal history teacher and Mohawk activist Michael Rice, left, argues that these monuments should also explain that the Mohawk chiefs whom Maisonneuve killed were honourably defending Rice's ancestors and homeland.



The way to redress that situation is to address the underlying wrong. It would be the height of hypocrisy to hide the Macdonald statues while we still accept the Indigenous poverty and dispossession he allowed to develop. When we do away with the injustices that keep First Nations dispossessed in their own land, we will be better positioned to recognize the enduring achievements of John A. Macdonald — and of Canada.

In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada made ninety-four "calls to action" that could lead toward reconciliation. None of the ninety-four involves removing statues — though they do call for more acknowledgment of Indigenous history. Mostly they affirm the need for "a nation-to-nation relationship between Aboriginal people and the Crown." Until we build that relationship, we have no grounds for thinking the meaningless removal of a few statues will have any positive consequences.

ABOVE: CTV MONTREAL. BELOW: BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

# OLD-SCHOOL DIY

## YOUR GUIDE TO SURVIVING CANADA THROUGHOUT THE AGES

**FROM SCURVY CURES AND FLU FIXES TO CANOE CRAFTING, IGLOO CARVING, AND MORE!**

*BY BROOKE CAMPBELL, KAITLIN VITT, AND MARK REID*
*ILLUSTRATIONS BY TIERRA CONNOR*

**YOU'VE DREAMED ABOUT ESCAPING THE BUSTLE** of everyday life, imagining a time when you weren't constantly battling with your kids over screen time, without long days at the office toiling under fluorescent lights, and free of traffic jams and taxes.

You yearn for the simple life, with plenty more time for friends and family. The days would be filled with hearty shared meals, time spent in nature, honest work, and a sense of community. Sounds like paradise, right?

Or would it be?

The truth is, the past is a tougher place than most of us realize — filled with intense manual labour at work and around the home, often-gruelling modes of transportation, illnesses that could easily turn fatal, limited creature comforts, and unreliable communication.

But, if you still insist that life was better in the past, here are some tips and tricks you'll need to survive in early Canada.

**Editor's Note:** Enjoy "Old-School DIY" but remember that this is informational only, for your reading pleasure. Influenza, muskets, unknown plants – even igloos – can be hazardous to one's health. These instructions are simplified and condensed. For more details visit CanadasHistory.ca/OldSchoolDIY.

# HOW TO MAKE SPRUCE BEER

It's 1535, and you're part of Jacques Cartier's exploration crew arriving in what will eventually become Quebec. The weeks-long voyage across the Atlantic has been perilous. Now, to make matters worse, you feel exhausted, weak, and irritable. You bleed easily, and your joints ache. Some members of the crew are losing teeth from their rotting gums.

That's right — you have scurvy, which we now know to be the result of a vitamin C deficiency.

Thankfully, the Haudenosaunee take pity on you and share their cure: spruce beer, which can be brewed during winter months when fresh produce — also a source of vitamin C — isn't available. For a non-alcoholic drink, simply boil spruce twigs in water and then strain off the liquid. The alcoholic version has a few more steps.

1. Fill a large pot with water and bring to a boil. Add spruce twigs until the water just covers them.
2. Roast oats in a pan. Add to pot.
3. Toast a few slices of bread. Add to pot.
4. Boil until about half of the original amount of water remains and bark loosens from the twigs. Strain.
5. Add molasses or brown sugar to the liquid. Put the mixture into a barrel. Add yeast. Remove scum from the liquid.
6. Allow mixture to ferment for several days before drinking.

# HOW TO CURE COD

It's the 1850s in a Newfoundland outport. Although you're no pirate, day after day you feel like you've struck gold with a scaly fortune of your own: seemingly endless stocks of cod like the catch you're hauling home.

Thick, yellow-tinged Newfoundland cod is popular worldwide, and the industry employs thousands. Mechanical refrigeration doesn't exist, so to preserve your fish you must cure your catch using a centuries-old salting method. "Making fish," the process of drying and salting cod, is a seasonal business that involves the entire family.

Although there are many ways of curing fish, you and your family will be making lightly pickled cod. It is a complex and technical process but yields a high-quality product.

1. Find at least two other people to help you to dress the cod. One cuts the throat of the fish and makes a cut down its belly. A second person guts and beheads it. The third splits the fish open to its tail and cuts out the bones.
2. In the bottom of a watertight barrel, lay a row of fish with the scaly side down. Sprinkle salt lightly on thin parts and more heavily where the fish is thicker. Layer another row of fish and salt it, repeating the process until the barrel is full. Leave for three to five days.
3. In a large tub, rinse away the brine and scrub off any salt that has accumulated on the fish.
4. Leave the fish in a pile, called a "waterhorse," on the fishing stage (a wooden platform at the water's edge) to drain.
5. Carefully spread the fish across flakes (wooden platforms for drying fish). Dry the fish, scales down, until they become stiff, then flip them so their scales face up. If it starts to rain or snow, pile the fish to protect them and then spread them out again. Drying the fish completely takes between two and six weeks.

# HOW TO TREAT THE FLU

You feel feverish, you have the chills, and medication to treat your condition is still centuries away. You shiver in your drafty 1830s log cabin, knowing that your influenza, if left untreated, could be fatal.

So you turn to a Mi'kmaq neighbour, who fights the flu using knowledge passed down through generations. She recommends making a hot drink using yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), which is a flowering plant that can also be used to stop blood flow, to treat insect bites, and to relieve toothaches. When picking the plant, make sure you go with someone who is familiar with the local flora, since yarrow — with its small white flowers — looks very similar to poisonous hemlock. A tea made from yarrow will increase your body temperature to make you sweat, an effective treatment for the early stages of the flu. Pregnant women, however, should avoid ingesting yarrow.

1. Harvest yarrow. You can dry some to use another time.
2. Add a small handful of leaves or flowers to boiling water. Let steep for fifteen minutes.
3. Strain the liquid. Drink up to three cups of the yarrow tea throughout the day.

# HOW TO MAKE PEMMICAN

It's the start of the fur-trading season. You and the other voyageurs are preparing for another long journey to the interior of the continent. At a Métis camp near the Red River Colony in what will someday be known as Manitoba, you line up to receive the bundles of pemmican that will keep you fed and fit during the arduous months ahead.

Nutritious and high in protein as well as calories (you'll burn at least five thousand a day), pemmican is a traditional Métis food usually made of dried bison meat, bison fat, and berries, such as saskatoons, chokecherries, or blueberries.

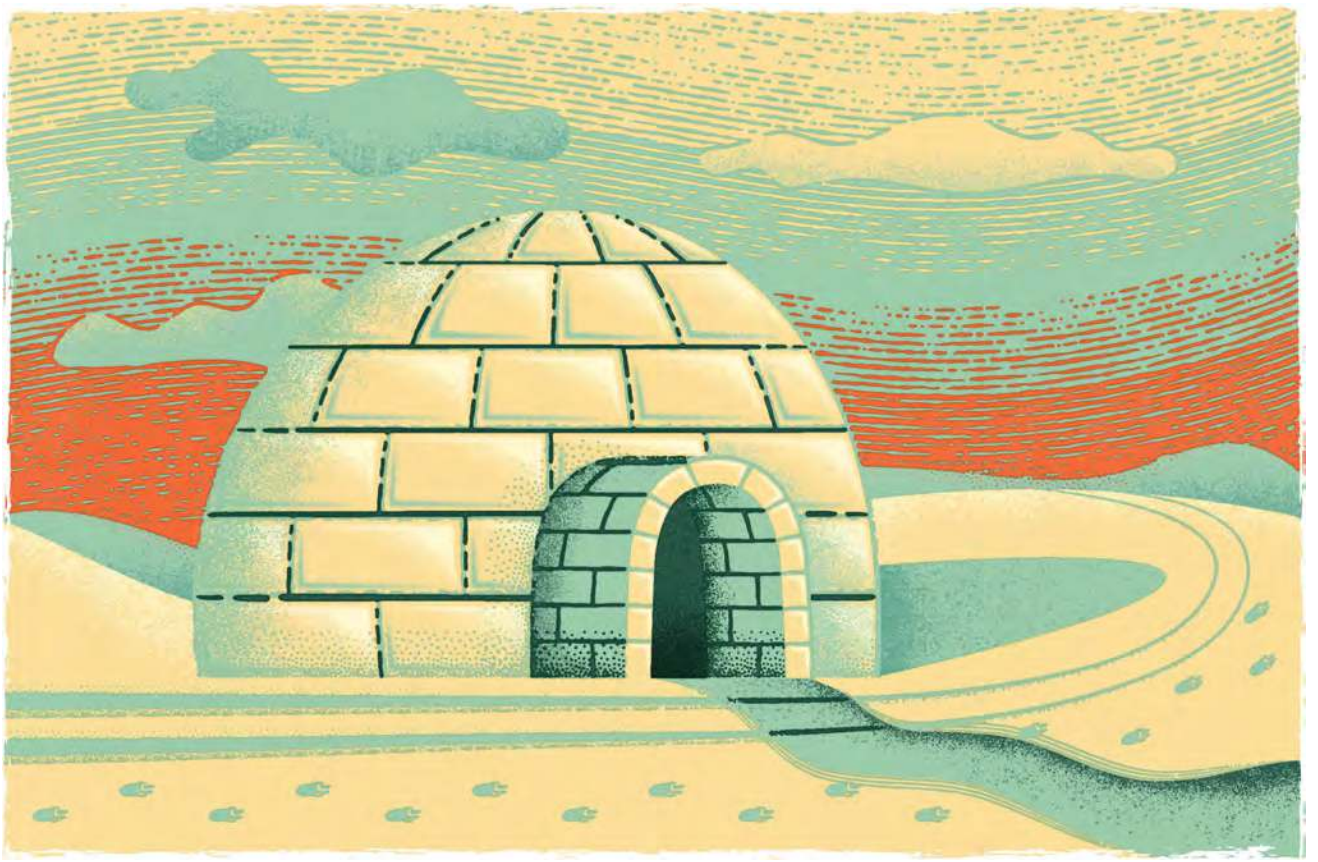
The women who make the pemmican also sew bags made of bison hide to contain it. When stored properly, pemmican will keep for years without spoiling.

1. Cut bison meat into long, thin strips. Dry over an open fire or in the sun.
2. Pound dried strips between rocks until flaky. Put the flakes in a bag made of bison hide.
3. Pour hot bison fat over the flakes.
4. Add dried berries and stir.
5. Sew the bags shut and let them cool.

# HOW TO START A FIRE WITH A BOW DRILL

It's the eleventh century, and back at Straumfjörðr — the Norse community in northwestern Newfoundland that will someday be known as L'Anse aux Meadows — the villagers are preparing for winter. Your assignment: Head inland and return with meat. Although there's not as much big game as back in Scandinavia, you should be able to catch some beaver, red fox, or Arctic hare. On occasion, you might come across the tracks of black bears or wolves. There are vast herds of caribou across the water in Markland, in what will eventually be called Labrador. But the moose that will be so prevalent on this island in the future will not be introduced until the 1870s. As night begins to fall, you prepare to make camp. Alas! You've forgotten your flint back at Straumfjörðr. Looks like you'll need to start your fire the old-fashioned way. With a sigh, you set to work building a bow drill.

1. Find two sticks – one straight and dry, about fifteen centimetres long, and the other slightly curved, roughly sixty centimetres in length. You'll also need two short, flat pieces of wood – one bone-dry, to be placed on the ground, and the other slightly damp, to be used to apply downward pressure while operating your bow drill. If you can't find flat pieces of wood, you can always use your axe to split some off a log. Willow, balsam fir, aspen, or spruce are the preferred species.
2. Collect dry dead plant matter such as leaves or grasses for a tinder bundle.
3. Cut a small notch in your dry, flat board and then remove a small wedge from your notch. It should be no more than one eighth of the circumference of the notch. Place the board on the ground. Make a small notch in the other board as well.
4. Tie a length of string to each end of the curved stick, leaving a bit of slack. Loop the string once around the straight stick, or "spindle."
5. Hold the dry board in place with your foot and insert the bottom end of your spindle into the notch. Take the second notched board and place it on top of the spindle as a cap.
6. Grasping the curved bow in your dominant hand, make a sawing motion, turning the spindle in the notch while pushing down with your opposite hand.
7. Saw the bow drill for an unbearably long time. Keep going. No, seriously – just keep going forever. Eventually, a small pile of hot wood dust should begin to accumulate. This is your "coal."
8. With a knife, transfer the coal to your tinder and blow gently until flames ignite.
9. Remember not to forget your flint ever again!



## HOW TO MAKE AN IGLOO

It's 1847, and you're part of a Hudson's Bay Company exploration mission to the Melville Peninsula in the Canadian Arctic. Caught by a storm while away from your base camp, you need shelter fast. Fortunately, you've learned the art of igloo-making from Inuit you have encountered on your journey. They have built these architectural wonders for millennia.

The igloo's parabolic shape provides support for the structure and prevents it from collapsing. The building material — snow — acts as an insulator, so any heat generated inside the dome mostly stays there.

The Inuit would dip their *savgut*, a probe made of a thin piece of bone, wood, or antler, in and out of the snow to determine its depth and quality. The snow should be solid but not too dense. They would then use their *pana*, a long-bladed snow knife, to cut blocks of snow.

1. Draw a circle in the snow marking the perimeter of your igloo. Your building blocks will come from within this circle, making the inside of the igloo deeper than the snow on the outside.
2. Cut blocks of snow from within the circle. The blocks can vary in size but usually measure roughly one metre by sixty centimetres by ten centimetres.
3. Place the blocks in a ring around the perimeter of your circle. Once the first ring has been laid, shave the edges of the first few blocks so that they form a ramp. Start the second layer from this slope, shaving the blocks as you go. As you continue to build, the blocks will spiral upwards. Bevel the tops of the blocks inwards, so that the structure will dome. The keystone block will be placed directly above you. Shove a block through the narrow opening, trimming its sides until it wedges snugly into the space.
4. Since you built the igloo around yourself, use your knife to carve a small entrance. Do this before you suffocate.
5. Using loose snow or smaller slices, fill any gaps between the blocks.
6. Carve a hole in the side of the igloo and replace it with a block of ice. This will serve as a window. Cut a hole near the apex of the igloo for ventilation. Bring in caribou sleeping robes and extra skins to cover the sleeping platform and to provide more warmth. Insert a block of snow in the entrance to act as a door.

# HOW TO BUILD A BIRCHBARK CANOE

In the early 1700s, the forests of what will come to be known as Canada are vast and seemingly impenetrable, but you still need to move quickly as you carry hundreds of kilograms of goods and furs. For centuries, Indigenous peoples of the eastern woodlands have been building light and durable birchbark canoes that can help you navigate the water highways that lie ahead.

Begin collecting what you will need to build the canoe. This is the most difficult step, but the effort will pay off — if you find quality material, your canoe can last a century.

Harvest the bark around June, when the sap is flowing. Remove it carefully by peeling off only the outer layer, so the tree can still survive by growing new bark.

Construction will take about a week.

1. Look for a large, straight tree free of limbs, bumps, and cracks. Test a small piece of bark to ensure that it is flexible and not brittle. Remove the bark in one large piece with your hands after cutting it with a sharp edge.

2. Collect spruce roots in a swampy or sandy area where they grow in straight lines. Pull roots from ground, remove the bark, and split them in half.
3. Collect spruce gum (sap) by scraping it off natural tree wounds. Heat in a pot over fire and add animal fat. In cool weather add more fat so the gum won't crack. Add less in warm weather so the gum will stay hard.
4. Build the canoe frame out of cedar. Place the frame on top of the bark. The bark's white outer layer should face up so it becomes the inside of the canoe. Cover the frame with rocks to hold it in place.
5. Bend the bark upwards and hold it in place with stakes driven into the ground. Make slits in the bark to allow for the curve. Sew sections of bark together with spruce roots.
6. Build the upper edges of the canoe frame – the inner and outer gunwales – and sandwich the bark between them. Wrap spruce roots around the gunwales to hold everything together.
7. Add the bow and stern. Take out the frame and add thwarts (lateral crosspieces). Add sheathing (thin pieces of cedar) and ribs.
8. Apply the spruce gum mixture over the seams to seal and waterproof the canoe.

# HOW TO MAKE A FEED-SACK DRESS

Are you a thrifty and creative housewife looking for new clothing and home textiles?

Why not make them yourself from empty flour or feed sacks!

In the tough economic times of the 1930s, when fabric is expensive and hard to come by, there is ample cotton available from bags containing flour, sugar, or animal feed. These sacks can be converted into many different items, from curtains and dish towels to clothing.

If you are lucky, you will find bags already printed with attractive patterns. But if the chicken feed comes only in plain beige bags, fear not — you can easily dye and decorate the cotton to your pleasing.

All you need for your dress are three bags and a pattern. You can even order the booklet *Smart Sewing Suggestions* from Maple Leaf Milling Co. for more inspiration.

1. Most cotton bags are sewn with chain stitching that begins in the lower corner near the fold. Cut the chain close to the bag. Hold on to the ends of the upper and lower threads and pull them, ripping the stitching apart.
2. Cover any markings on the bag with lard or soak them in kerosene overnight. The next day, wash the bag with lukewarm water. A few more washings will remove any remaining traces of ink.
3. Dye the material, if desired. The material dyes easily and produces rich and long-lasting colour.
4. Use your pattern to cut out and sew your dress. You may have to piece together sections of fabric to fit the pattern.
5. Finish off any raw edges by applying bias tape. Embroider designs or appliqué patterned pieces of fabric onto the dress to decorate it.

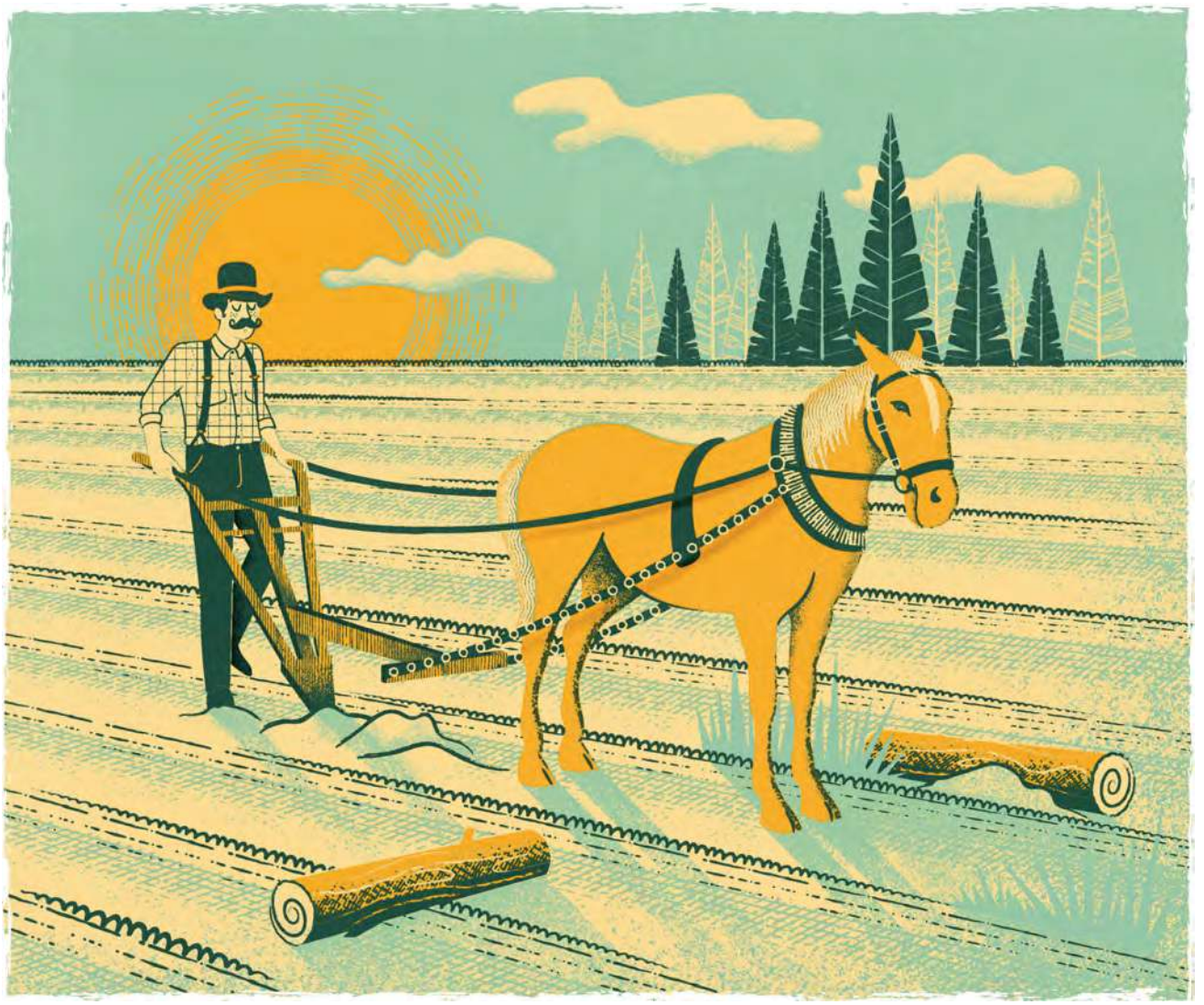
# HOW TO SURVIVE A DUST STORM

You see the cloud rising massively on the horizon, blackening the sky. You have only moments to spare before the dust storm reaches your home.

It's the beginning of the dust bowl during the dirty thirties, a decade full of drought, scorching temperatures, crop disease, and insect plagues on the prairies. Though crop production is declining, farmers will continue to plant in hopes the worst has passed. The seemingly endless dry spell will eventually force thousands of climate refugees to flee the southern prairies.

The storm hits, and loose topsoil fiercely swirls about. You can barely see the ground at your feet, and you have difficulty breathing. Surviving these regularly occurring dust storms and adjusting to their presence has become a way of life.

1. Take shelter.
2. Put a lamp on the windowsill so your children will spot the house on their way home from school.
3. Place wet rags or sheets at the bottom of doors and along windowsills.
4. Set the table with dishes upside-down. Store dishes the same way.
5. When outside, cover your face using homemade goggles, a damp kerchief on your nose and mouth, or a veil.
6. When the storm passes, sweep away the piles of dust.



## HOW TO PREPARE YOUR LAND FOR SEEDING

The journey from York to your new homestead in the London District of Upper Canada was arduous, but now that you've arrived you know that it was worth it. You immediately set to building a log house. Without shelter, you and your family won't last long out here in the wilderness.

It's back-breaking work building your home, but soon it's finished — now it's time to focus on your next task. You can already imagine the golden wheat and stooks of hay surrounding your newly built cabin — but that's not what's in front of you now at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Instead, your land is covered in rocks and trees.

You hope your property will eventually be bountiful enough to provide for your family, and even to yield extra crops that you can sell. You need to clear the land, a process that will span years; but even before it is completely clear you can sow crops between tree stumps.

1. Cut down trees. Use a stoneboat (a wooden sled) or wagon to carry stones away. Break up large stones with a sledgehammer, or use a horse or ox and a chain to drag them out.
2. Pull a plough through the land using oxen or horses. Do this about four years after beginning to clear the land so that any remaining stumps have rotted, making them easier to pull from the ground.
3. Drag a harrow – a wooden frame that has spiked teeth or a tree limb – behind horses or oxen, working the land between remaining stumps.
4. Break up the dirt with a roller, a round piece of wood pulled by horses or oxen.
5. Pull out any remaining rotten stumps using a yoke of oxen.

# HOW TO FIRE A MUSKET

It's September 1759, and you find yourself on the Plains of Abraham as part of a last-ditch British effort to capture the fortress of Quebec. In the distance, the French forces approach. The fate of the continent hangs in the balance.

Victory will go to the troops that can fire their muskets the fastest and, above all, can hold the line the longest. You and your fellow redcoats have spent untold hours drilling for this moment.

1. Grab a black-powder cartridge and use your teeth to tear open its tail, the piece of paper at its end.
2. Cock the musket halfway and push forward the hinged metal frizzen to reveal the flash pan. Pour in a small amount of black powder.
3. Close the flash pan and hold the musket vertically with the barrel up.
4. Empty the remaining black powder into the barrel.
5. Insert a lead ball into the barrel and then push in the remaining cartridge paper.
6. Use a ramrod to push the wadded cartridge paper and ball into the breech.
7. Cock the musket fully.
8. Aim and fire.

THE GREATEST FIGHT IN THE HISTORY OF SPRINGTIME!

# THE BATTLE FOR FEBRUARY 2

A SHADOWY TALE

# BEAR VS. GROUND-HOG

**THE GROUNDHOG WASN'T ALWAYS CANADIANS' CHOICE FOR PREDICTING THE END OF WINTER.** BY ALAN MACEACHERN

**On February 3, 1900, British Columbia's *Cascade Record* newspaper noted that "Yesterday was 'bear' or 'groundhog' day." The newspaper's phrasing spoke to a general indecision among Canadians in that era, torn between celebrating the majestic bruin we had long counted on to foretell the weather for the remainder of the winter or an upstart rodent from the United States. Spoiler alert — the groundhog won out. But just think of how close we came to celebrating Bear Day.**

The roots of Groundhog Day lie in medieval Europe, where the Roman Catholic feast of Candlemas on February 2 was associated with winter's midpoint. "Half your wood and half your hay/ Should be left on Candlemas Day," went one saying. Folk wisdom also held that good weather on that day foretold bad weather for the rest of the winter: "If Candlemas Day be bright and clear/ We'll have two winters in the year." A tradition developed that if a hibernating animal — a badger, bear, fox, or marmot, depending on where you were — emerged on February 2 and saw its shadow, it would retreat to its den, and winter would last four or six more weeks.

When Europeans came to North America, they brought this bit of folklore with them. In Canada, the bear became the animal of choice for Candlemas predictions. Its qualifications were impeccable: a famed hibernator, it ranged widely and in large numbers across the country, and its size made it both easy to observe and worth keeping an eye on. Nineteenth-century newspapers occasionally mentioned its prognosticatory power. "What child is not told," asked the *Toronto Globe* in 1897, "about the brown bear emerging from his lair on the fateful 2nd of February…." It is worth noting, though, that this was the *Globe*'s first-ever reference to the folk wisdom and that the article containing it appeared in June. The bear's February activity was not yet regularly considered February-newsworthy.

But to the south, a rodent was rising. When the Pennsylvania Dutch — actually German-speakers, "Dutch" being a corruption of "Deutsch" — arrived in America in the 1700s they adapted the February 2 custom using the European marmot's local cousin, the groundhog (a.k.a. woodchuck). The term "Ground-hog Day" first appeared in mid-1800s America. Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, was hosting celebrations under that name by the 1880s, and by the end of the nineteenth century Groundhog Day was celebrated, if that is the correct word, throughout the United States.

When Canadian newspapers began around the turn of the nineteenth century to draw annual attention to the February 2 lore, there was no similar consistency regarding which animal they cited. At first, a majority favoured the bear. In late February 1896, Quebec's *Sherbrooke Examiner* published "Candlemas Bear" by an Ontario writer: "Who, as oft has been related/ Hastened back into his lair/ After he had seen his shadow/ Cast amid the solar glare," went the poem in part. Newspapers on the Prairies were particularly

The presentation of Jesus and the purification of the Virgin Mary, portrayed in this tapestry at a cathedral in Strasbourg, France, is celebrated at the feast of Candlemas. It is observed on February 2, a day when Roman Catholics and other Christians bring candles to be blessed at their churches.

OPPOSITE PAGE: ISTOCK, 123RF. THIS PAGE: PUBLIC DOMAIN

pro-bear, but many in southern Ontario and British Columbia — and thus perhaps closer to American influence — settled on the groundhog straightaway.

Still other publications swung from one animal to the other. Ontario's *Newmarket Era* wrote about the bear regularly each February 2 until 1904, strayed to the groundhog for a single year, and then returned to the bear. In similar fashion, Private Fred Young of London, Ontario, would write from the trenches of France in 1916, without noting any incongruity, "This is 'groundhog' day in the land of our 'Lady of the Snows.' [And] the query as to whether the bear saw his shadow in Canada rose to our lips."

The confusion stemmed in part from the fact that few Canadians knew how the February 2 tradition came to be, and so they had no idea whether one animal was to be preferred. While some journalists recounted the custom's European roots, others said it was Indigenous or French-Canadian in origin. And, because it was seldom mentioned or remembered that Groundhog Day was an American invention, Canadian newspapers rarely suggested that it might be our patriotic duty to prefer the bear. *The Ledge* of New Denver in B.C.'s Slocan Valley was an exception when in 1904 it grumbled, "February 2nd was Groundhog Day in old Missouri. In the Slocan it was Tuesday. The bear saw its shadow."

But the Canadian bear slowly succumbed to the creeping conformity of the American groundhog. In a familiar cultural pattern, Canadian readers were inundated with the American version. American syndicated children's columns such as "Burgess Bedtime Stories" taught Canadian children and parents alike the story of the groundhog's big day. It was the groundhog, not the bear, that was the subject of cartoons

Top row, left to right: Wiarton Willie, Shubenacadie Sam, Dundas Donna (a coati, not a groundhog), and Fred la marmotte.

Bottom row, left to right: Two River Tunnel, puppet prognosticator Manitoba Merv, and Balzac Billy, actually a human impersonating a groundhog.

ABOVE FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: COURTESY OF TOWN OF SOUTH BRUCE PENINSULA, CP IMAGES, @DUNDASDONNA, COURTESY OF VILLE DE PIERCE. BELOW FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: COURTESY OF TWO RIVERS WILDLIFE PARK, COURTESY OF OAK HAMMOCK MARSH, COURTESY OF THE BBCA/KATE DAVIES

# CANADA'S FURRY FORECASTERS

**Wiarton Willie, the albino groundhog from central Ontario, likely has the most famous shadow in the country, but as many as ten of his extended family (including at least one puppet) attempt to predict the end of winter each year all over Canada. Nova Scotia boasts both Shubenacadie Sam and Two Rivers Tunnel, the latter from Cape Breton Island, while Val d'Espoir, Quebec, is home to Fred la marmotte. Over the years, Brandon Bob and Winnipeg Willow (and now Winnipeg Wyn) have provided predictions for Manitoba, while Balzac Billy – a human in a groundhog costume – does likewise in Alberta. Naturally, Toronto had to get in on the act with Dundas Donna (actually a South American coati), while just to the northeast Kleinburg, Ontario, hosts Gary the Groundhog. –** *Nancy Payne*

and jokes reprinted from sources in the United States. "'People may ridicule the groundhog theory as much as they like,' remarked an old fellow yesterday. 'All the same, there's truth in it,'" the *Liberal* of Richmond Hill, Ontario, reported in an article borrowed from the *Philadelphia Bulletin*.

Moreover, while there is no evidence that the groundhog possesses forecasting ability superior to the bear's, the groundhog did enjoy other natural advantages during the day's evolution from a folk observation of creatures in the wild to a manufactured urban event. The groundhog was portable: You could put it in a cage, carry it to a podium, raise it to your shoulder, and have it whisper to you. It was common: Whereas modern life meant bears were being pushed out of populated areas, groundhogs were becoming more

**"Here in Manitoba," a newspaper noted, "no woodchuck in his senses would voluntarily emerge into the cold on February 2."**

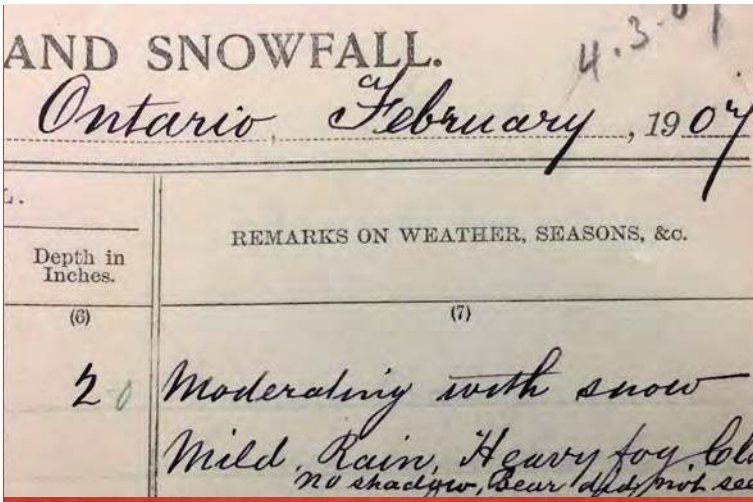
numerous than ever before. And it was, relatively speaking, docile — or at least it was unlikely to rip off your arm and kill you. In retrospect, the bear never had a chance.

Each February 2 of the early twentieth century saw increasing references to the groundhog in Canadian print media as references to bears declined. By the 1910s the groundhog was already clearly the front-runner, and by the 1930s the bear had all but disappeared. When Wiarton, Ontario, asserted itself as the holiday's national headquarters in 1956 and subsequently invented Wiarton Willie, it was both the culmination of one Canadian story and the beginning of another.

But before we get too mournful that Canada did not retain a homegrown version of the February 2 tradition, let's remember how unsuited that tradition is to Canadian experience anyway. As the *Winnipeg Evening Tribune* wrote in 1939, "This is Ground-Hog Day. So what?" The paper recounted the custom's roots in Europe, where it was actually possible to imagine that the winter's worst might pass so early. "But here in Manitoba," it noted, "no woodchuck in his senses would voluntarily emerge into the cold on February 2. [T]he Manitoba winter is unlikely to end on February 2, whether the sky is cloudy or not."

And, of course, the folklore presumes the presence of the hibernating animal in the first place. Not all parts of Canada are so fortunate. The editor of the *Charlottetown Guardian* noted ruefully in 1929, "This is Candlemas Day. As we have no ground hogs on this Island we must depend on the bear for our weather predictions, and we have no bear."

COURTESY OF ALAN MACEACHERN


AND SNOWFALL.

Ontario, February, 1907

| Depth in Inches. | REMARKS ON WEATHER, SEASONS, &c. |
|---|---|
| (6) | (7) |
| 2 0 | Moderating with snow |
| | Mild, Rain, Heavy fog Cl |
| | No shadow, Bear did not see |

The entry for February 2, 1907 in the weather observation journal of Thomas Andrew of Arden, Ontario.

## SIGNS OF SPRING

**In 2014, what was then Environment Canada transferred to Western University on long-term loan its collection of historical daily weather observations recorded by volunteer observers between 1870 and 1960. Since then, students and I have pored over almost half the collection – maybe a million observations from all across Canada. When we happened upon a February 2 observation, we looked for a reference to an animal and its shadow. But we have seen only one. "No shadow, Bear did not see it," wrote Thomas Andrew of Arden, Ontario, on February 2, 1907.**

**This dearth of news related to groundhogs, or even bears, came as a surprise. But it is also a reminder that people of the past had countless other ways of interpreting the weather, the seasons, and the natural world based on first-hand experience. In the course of Andrew's observations, for example, he also remarked on the first spring appearance of a wide variety of birds and other animals, and he noted when plants blossomed, trees leafed, frogs piped, and lake ice formed and broke up. February 2 was just one of 365 days each year for tracking nature's changes.**

**The one great advantage the Groundhog Day tradition possesses is that it is associated with a single day, a focal point that has helped it to become culturally entrenched in a way other folk wisdom about nature has not. The irony is that, while those who make weather observations for Environment and Climate Change Canada today are far likelier to mention the groundhog on February 2, they are also far less likely to offer other natural-history information the rest of the year. In a sense, Groundhog Day commemorates, and stands in for, all the nature lore that most of us have forgotten.**

*– Alan MacEachern*

Bonavista lighthouse, Newfoundland and Labrador.

# Hope and heartbreak on the Rock

## Touring Newfoundland's haunting Bonavista Peninsula. *by Nancy Payne*

For the sheer density of history that is packed in to a relatively small area, it's hard to beat Newfoundland and Labrador's gloriously rugged Bonavista Peninsula, where a drive of perhaps twenty-five kilometres transports visitors through centuries of events and stories that deserve to be much better known by the rest of Canada.

Case in point: Port Union, North America's only purpose-built union town, which was founded by Sir William Ford Coaker and now includes a National Historic Site. Coaker is one of those rare people who deserves the title of visionary, and yet I'll come clean: I'd never heard of him before this trip. While working at various jobs that took him around the island, Coaker saw struggling, isolated fishermen at the mercy of wealthy merchants. He formed the Fishermen's Protective Union in 1908 with nineteen members; by 1914 it represented twenty-one thousand members — about half of the fishermen in what was then still the British colony.

Built between 1916 and 1921, Port Union offered fair prices for fish and affordable housing for workers at the fish plant, not to mention unheard-of amenities such as electricity, the territory's first elevators outside St. John's, night classes at the community school, a movie theatre, a temperance-inspired soft-drink bottling facility, and a resident local nurse. The *Fishermen's Advocate* newspaper, essential reading from its founding in 1910 to its demise in the mid-1980s, educated, stirred controversy, and fostered bonds among its far-flung readers.

A statue near Elliston, N.L., commemorates the 1914 sealing disaster.

Local guides, many of whom worked at the fish plant until its closure in 2010, lead tours of the restored factory building, which houses a wide range of items including the *Advocate*'s presses, back issues of the paper, examples of local products, and Coaker's own effects. A self-guided walking tour around the town culminates in a stop at Coaker's commanding gravesite overlooking the largely quiet harbour. I left the area with a bittersweet sense of a place where life improved for so many but for such a short time.

The ocean air blew away the wistfulness as we continued our drive, thinking we'd make a quick photo stop about twenty minutes up the road in the village of Elliston. But, as with so much of Newfoundland's story, humour and history ran right

BARBERSTOCK; NANCY PAYNE

Root cellars abound at Elliston, N.L., the self-styled Root Cellar Capital of the World.

up against each other once again. Sure, at the entrance to the village there's a big sign declaring Elliston the "Root Cellar Capital of the World," but just a few kilometres on we discovered a stunning cove with a tragic story to tell, where a huge granite slab lists the names of the 251 men of the *Southern Cross* and the *Newfoundland* who died in the 1914 sealing disaster. A haunting statue depicts a father and son from the village clutched in an embrace, awaiting death. The peaceful location and brilliant sunshine somehow made the memorial scene even more devastating. A short walk away is the John C. Crosbie Sealers Interpretation Centre, which explores a way of life fraught with danger.

Sobered and sombre, we made the short drive on to Bonavista, which takes its name from the Italian *O buon vista*! (O happy sight!), words supposedly uttered by Giovanni Caboto (a.k.a. John Cabot) when he is said to have landed here in 1497. (The claim is disputed by residents of Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, among others.)

After taking in the famous red-and-white-striped lighthouse and visiting the statue of Cabot perched atop the jagged cliffs — there are no railings in sight, so if you're from away, like us, and it's windy, like it always is, do be sensible — there's a full-sized replica of his ship, the *Matthew*, to explore in the town.

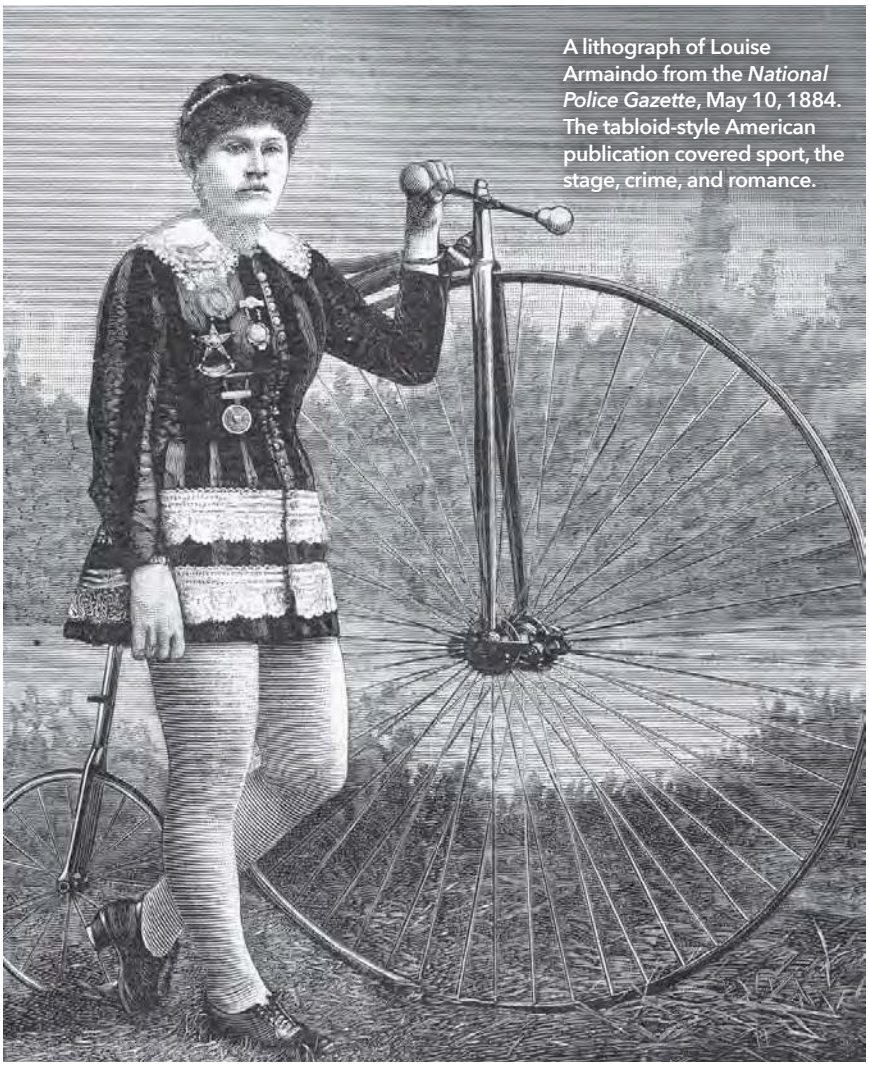
Not far away lies the Mockbeggar Plantation Provincial Historic Site, restored to its state in 1939, when F. Gordon Bradley, a passionate advocate of Confederation with Canada, lived there. (The name is said to refer to boggy wet soil that is treacherous for those on foot.) After working with Newfoundland Premier Joey Smallwood to negotiate the union with Canada, Bradley became the new province's first representative in the federal cabinet.

Many restaurants along the Bonavista Peninsula offer rib-sticking fare like this meal of ham, beans and biscuits.

I hope it doesn't sound too clichéd to say I had "I'se the B'y" running through my head as I wandered around the nearby Ryan Premises National Historic Site — the traditional folk song throws some good-natured shade on the quality of Bonavista cod. After a visit to the on-site Bonavista Museum, the importance of cod to this community and this province was crystal-clear, if once again imbued with some sadness at what's been lost with the fishery's collapse. The group of white clapboard buildings with neat red trim, once a thriving fish-processing site owned by the Ryan merchant family, now offers musical performances and art exhibitions alongside historical interpretation.

After a day spent rambling over one small piece of one peninsula on this vast island, it's obvious that all that I or any visitor — especially one interested in Newfoundland's history — can hope to do is to become aware of how much else there is to learn. It would take a lifetime to do justice to this amazing place — which sounds pretty terrific, come to think of it.

BARRETT & MACKAY PHOTO; NANCY PAYNE



A lithograph of Louise Armaindo from the *National Police Gazette*, May 10, 1884. The tabloid-style American publication covered sport, the stage, crime, and romance.

OPEN BOOK

# Racing against the best

*Louise Armaindo was one of Canada's first women professional athletes and was also a celebrated performer. Hailing from the Montreal area, she earned her reputation first as a strongwoman and trapeze artist in Chicago and then as a high-wheel bicycle racer who competed on tracks across America beginning in the 1880s.*

*For the most part Armaindo's only serious challengers were men, whom she often bested in races that took place for several hours per day over consecutive days. The events drew thousands of spectators — including large numbers of women who turned out to see Armaindo — as well as press coverage and trackside betting.*

*In* Muscle on Wheels: Louise Armaindo and the High-Wheel Racers of Nineteenth-Century America, *sports historian M. Ann Hall shows that, even in the Victorian era, women participated in bicycle racing, including on the high-wheel bicycles that became the standard machine in the 1870s.*

*Many of these women displayed enough talent and athletic ability to earn a living while competing in colourful costumes that contributed to the entertainment and occasionally attracted derision. But it's Armaindo's story — and her ability to compete against the top men racers such as John Prince, William Woodside, and William Morgan — that makes her a fitting central character for Hall's book.*

## Champion Bicyclienne, 1883

*by M. Ann Hall*

**LOUISE ARMAINDO CONTINUED** to pit her skills against a handful of professional riders. Although the rewards were primarily financial, she was a competitor who enjoyed beating her male rivals, especially when the stakes were for the "Championship of America." In September 1882 she again met John Prince at the Polo Grounds in New York where she received a three-mile handicap in a twenty-five-mile race. Prince wore white tights, his arms bare, and on his head was a black jockey cap. Louise was dressed in a crimson jacket trimmed with silver lace, red trunks, red-and-white stockings, heavy walking shoes, and a scarlet silk cap. A diamond crescent glittered at her throat. There were some five hundred spectators in the grandstand, many of whom were women wearing Louise's crimson colours.

Prince rode a fifty-four-inch Yale machine; Armaindo's was the same, but it had a fifty-one-inch wheel. Prince took the lead from the start and steadily increased the distance between them, slowly making up the three-mile handicap. Louise worked her pedals "like the cranks of a locomotive," and, with perspiration running down her face, it was clear that she was overdressed for the occasion. Near the end, the crowd cheered enthusiastically in support of Louise, and the women waved their handkerchiefs. It was all to no avail because Prince passed her on the second lap of the last mile, winning the race by eighty-four seconds. It was a slow race since they were some eighteen minutes behind the record.

Tom Eck was not only Louise's official manager and agent but also her partner and probable lover. In press reports as early as 1879, Tom was often referred to as Louise's husband. However, no record was found of an official marriage between the two. It is also clear that they were business partners because they needed each other to earn money. It was Tom's job to find her opponents and races, and to pro-

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mote her growing reputation. He was also in charge of her training.

Occasionally, when no challenger could be found, he was forced to go up against Louise himself, to his inevitable defeat, which brought about charges of "hippodroming" or predetermining the outcome. After watching Tom and Louise race at a meet in Springfield, Massachusetts, one commentator complained, "If it is necessary to exhibit female riders to please a certain element in a crowd a half-mile dash is enough to serve the purpose." When there were no human riders available to challenge, Tom pitted Louise against a horse. All this put her in superb condition for the first serious test of her racing career. She would race against the leading male professionals without the advantage of a handicap.

## Supremely confident, Louise Armaindo was going to try to break all short-distance records.

A reporter was watching Louise train and ride at the Chicago Natatorium in preparation for these races. Suddenly wheeling up to the visitor, Louise stopped, dismounted, and inquired, "How do you like me for ze expert bicyclienne?" "Oh, pretty well," said the reporter, who attempted to transcribe her accent, "but you are almost too fat to be in good racing condition." "Too fat! Too fat!" Louise screamed. "You of my leg feel! You ze muscle find and not ze fat!" She was an incredibly strong and superbly fit young woman, and she was about to prove it.

For six days in May 1883, William M. Woodside, William J. Morgan, and Louise Armaindo took part in the first real long-distance race for the U.S. championship. On a makeshift track laid out in the Battery D Armory on Chicago's lakefront, with thirteen laps to the mile, they raced twelve hours a day, beginning at eleven in the morning and ending at eleven at night. They took breaks whenever they wished, but to do so meant that someone else would move ahead. At the end of the first day, there was little separating the three riders. After the fourth day, Armaindo had moved ahead slightly after completing 561 miles to Morgan's 559 and Woodside's 558.

"For persistent attention to the business and continuous staying qualities," wrote an awed reporter, "Louise Armaindo, the French girl, takes the souvenir." Louise increased her lead over the last two days and closed the seventy-two-hour race at 843 miles. Morgan came second after 820 miles, whereas Woodside had seriously fallen back, finishing at only 723 miles. Her post-race commentary was interesting: "No one can have any idea how I had to punish myself to hold to the end; but I had determined to beat those two men, and I did it." She also commented on the presence of a great many women in the audience, who encouraged her with kind words and rapt attention. For Louise, that was one of the best things about the race.

The contest was a huge success, with some two thousand people visiting the armory nightly to watch the exciting action. Newspapers praised Louise's win against the best riders of Ireland and Canada, often failing to mention that she too was from Canada. An editorial in an Arizona paper, willing to concede bigger hearts and clearer brains to the "gentler sex," said it would also have to accept their stronger limbs and greater endurance. "Don't let us glorify the males any more at the expense of the females," said the writer, but "let us place them in the same niche to which their virtues and their limb power entitles them."

In addition to her share of the gate, Louise was awarded two valuable badges for her victory. One represented professional honours and was valued at three hundred dollars. It was in the shape of a wheel suspended by chains from two bars that were appropriately engraved. The other, given to her by admirers, was a magnificent five-point gold star valued at five hundred dollars. In the centre was an engraving of a woman cyclist surrounded by five diamonds.

Woodside was crushed. Admitting to a "breakdown" towards the end of the race, he was far from convinced that the "plucky little" Louise was the better rider, and he wanted another chance to prove it. He immediately issued a challenge: "I therefore hereby challenge her to ride a similar contest for $100 to $1000 a side, and the championship of America, the race to be open to all comers who will deposit a similar amount. If Mademoiselle does not care to ride so long a distance again, I will give her five miles start in fifty, or ten in one hundred, and race for $100 to $500 on any track not less than eight laps to the mile." Louise did not ignore Woodside's challenge, but she had

A rare photograph of Louise Armaindo, circa 1883, by John Wood.

COLLECTION OF M. ANN HALL. COURTESY MCGILL-QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY PRESS

Above: Other women high-wheel bicycle racers and trick riders of the 1880s included (left to right): Jessie Oakes, from Lancashire, England; Annie Sylvester, born near St. Louis; Elsa von Blumen, born in Kansas to German immigrants; and May Allen, who grew up in Pittsburgh but was billed as the "English Girl" after marrying a British sprinter who became her manager.

her own agenda and was not about to get sidetracked. A week after the race in Chicago, she again defeated Morgan and Woodside during a 120-mile race in Janesville, Wisconsin, riding forty miles each evening on a track of twenty-three laps to the mile. Louise took the lead from the beginning and won by three laps. …

Prince, Morgan, and Woodside were among the best professional high-wheel racers in the United States, and perhaps elsewhere. Physically they were considerably bigger and taller than Louise, whose height was variously reported at between five feet one and five feet four. Shorter in stature, she was well-muscled, with her weight usually stated as around 130 pounds. Taller racers obviously had an advantage because they could use a bicycle with a larger front wheel, but a shorter rival could nullify this advantage with quicker, more efficient pedalling. …

The Armaindo-Morgan-Woodside racing trio was a remarkably popular entertainment attraction, the more so because of Louise. There was no question that more "ladies" attended the races than would be the case if only males were racing. It was also important to keep these contests as exciting and close as possible, and Woodside, probably the speedier racer, agreed to give the other two a handicap. Their next race was in Milwaukee's Exposition Building, where a new board track had been constructed. Tom Eck declared it

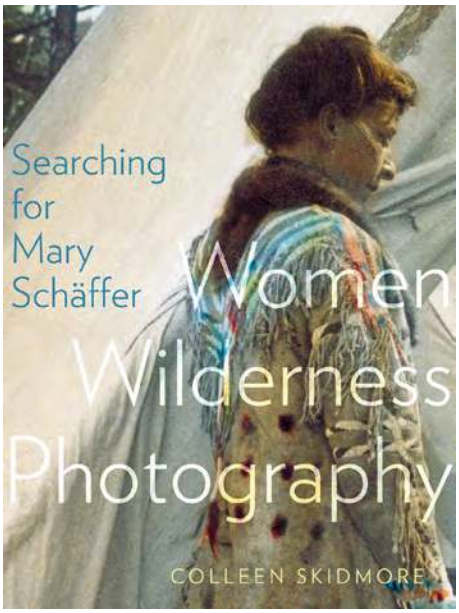
COLLECTIONS OF LORNE SHIELDS AND JOHN WEISS, COURTESY MCGILL-QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY PRESS

to be the fastest track in America — faster than those in the Boston Casino or the Chicago Exposition — and also the safest, at eight laps to the mile with easier turns and a smoother floor surface. Over the six-day, three-hours-per-night race, Woodside agreed to give Morgan a twelve-mile start and Louise thirty miles, both to be distributed over the six days.

The event turned out to be the best and most exciting racing so far witnessed in the Northwest. Louise declared she was planning to go for speed rather than endurance because of only a three-hour ride each night. Increasingly boastful and supremely confident, she was also going to try to break all short-distance records. By the second day, Louise was in front, but Morgan and Woodside were catching up. Some five thousand free tickets were made available to children, who began filling up the building, along with an increasing number of women spectators.

Louise was tireless and clearly the crowd favourite: "When the plucky little woman would urge her noiseless steed and flash past either of her male competitors, the spectators loudly testified their appreciation," wrote the *Milwaukee Sentinel*. They were even more appreciative when she changed her costume to a gaudy ensemble of pink silk tights, bronze boots, white undervest, wine-coloured jacket, and red-white-and-blue jockey cap. On the last day, Morgan and Woodside were hampered with problems with their bicycles, leaving Louise the clear winner with 294 miles to Morgan's 285 and Woodside's 277.

*From* Muscle on Wheels: Louise Armaindo and the High-Wheel Racers of Nineteenth-Century America, *by M. Ann Hall. Reprinted with permission of McGill-Queen's University Press.*




EXPLORING CREATIVITY

## Searching for Mary Schäffer: Women Wilderness Photography

by Colleen Skidmore
University of Alberta Press,
372 pages, $34.95

Significantly titled *Searching for Mary Schäffer*, this nuanced study by Colleen Skidmore, a social historian of photography at the University of Alberta, does not claim the final word on Mary Townsend Sharples Schäffer (later Warren), a photographer, writer, botanical artist, and mapmaker known primarily for her work in the Canadian Rockies. Integrating newly available archival material into a clear, comprehensive, and generously illustrated overview of Schäffer's life and work, Skidmore covers key issues in women's history and historiography. She also discusses, with discernment and intelligent scepticism, the ways narrative texts and photographic images can reveal — but also at times conceal or confuse — the facts of biography and history.

Born in 1867 in West Chester, Pennsylvania, Schäffer later settled in Banff, Alberta, near the mountain landscape of her best-known book, *Old Indian Trails: Incidents of Camp and Trail Life, Covering Two Years' Exploration through the Rocky Mountains of Canada* (1911). Schäffer's writings and "magic lantern lectures," illustrated with hand-coloured slides, had great popular appeal, feeding those turn-of-the-twentieth-century hungers for "exotic" adventure travel, for a vision of nature as a refuge of moral and physical health, and for the colonial project of mapping, claiming, and controlling territory through rational, scientific study.

Establishing some basic biographical facts, including Schäffer's explorations of the Rockies and her later trip to Japan with fellow American and frequent travelling partner Mary "Molly" Adams, Skidmore offers a deft overview of the existing work on the photographer. Early reports could be condescending, dismissing her as a dilettante, a socialite, a "Philadelphia lady." Later accounts often focussed on her emotional relationships, playing up the mythology that Schäffer's wilderness excursions were a personal response to the death of her first husband. In fact, Schäffer valued her work as work, and her financial situation was by no means set, as shown by anxious, detailed letters about income and expenses.

Skidmore also challenges the tendency to view Schäffer's texts and photographs as straight-up documentary evidence, instead viewing her published travel accounts as forms of creative non-fiction that developed the literary persona of "Mary Schäffer," a self-deprecating and undaunted female traveller who makes light of hardship with wit and spirit. As Adams wrote in a 1908 letter to a friend: "I kept a diary of facts. Mrs. S. kept one of facts and fiction, very amusing." Comparing accounts of events by different people, as well as material intended for public consumption with that meant as a private record, Skidmore suggests Schäffer sometimes embellished for the sake of a good narrative, "rather in the spirit of a campfire gathering."

Skidmore sees Schäffer's photographs as valuable material artifacts that convey a great deal of information about habits, dress, and dwellings, but she also views them as created works that came about through a complex negotiation between photographer and subject as well as an ongoing collaboration with the viewer. Many of her images, especially those dealing with Indigenous subjects, will be read differently by a contemporary audience.

This is where Skidmore navigates some tricky junctures of intersectional feminism. Schäffer was often disadvantaged as a woman, in her unconventional roles as alpinist, adventure traveller, cartographer, and botanist. But she was also a socially privileged white woman whose view of Indigenous life, though generally sympathetic, shared many of the common colonial prejudices of her era. As Skidmore points out, Schäffer was credited with "discovering" Maligne Lake, even though she was walking in the Indigenous knowledge of the Iyarhe Nakoda people (then sometimes called Stoney), who had long referred to the lake as Chaba Imne. At the same time, Schäffer's photograph of her guide, Sampson Beaver, and his family is a striking and complex image that can't quite be reduced to being an example of the "colonial gaze."

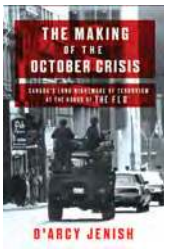
Interpretations of Schäffer's work, Skidmore acknowledges, have shifted over time and will continue to be analyzed and contested. "The fact that readers and viewers remain interested in, and at times highly critical of, Schäffer's works (and Schäffer herself) a century or more later," she writes, "is testament to the quality, reach, and significance of her images and narratives in her day and our own."

Reviewed by **Alison Gillmor,** a Winnipeg journalist and art historian.

CREATURES OF THEIR TIME

## The Making of the October Crisis: Canada's Long Nightmare of Terrorism at the Hands of the FLQ

by D'Arcy Jenish
Doubleday Canada, 366 pages, $35




"Just watch me." Nearly fifty years after the fact, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's defiant quip lives on. But what else remains in the Canadian consciousness about the 1970 October Crisis?

Canadians watched — in shock, awe, or disgust — as Trudeau invoked the *War Measures Act*, sending soldiers with "guns and helmets" into the streets of Montreal and Quebec City and authorizing police to round up people with connections, real or concocted, to the Front de Libération du Québec (FLQ) and its kidnapping of a diplomat and politician.

In the subsequent debate over the impact of the sweeping powers regarding civil liberties in Canada, the scope and deadly impact of the FLQ's campaign of politically motivated violence — terrorism — has drifted into the mists of time.

With Quebec having recently elected a former separatist cabinet minister as premier, heading a party largely formed from disaffected sovereignists, a fresh look at the most startlingly dramatic period in the province's political evolution is timely.

D'Arcy Jenish, a journalist and the author of several previous works of historical non-fiction, including three about hockey, has written a brisk, well-researched, and richly detailed account of the "two hundred bombings, dozens of bank robberies, six deaths, and two kidnappings" that jangled Quebec's nerves from early 1963 until the fateful fall of 1970.

The book is a much-expanded version of a feature story Jenish wrote in 2010 for *Legion* magazine on the fortieth anniversary of the October Crisis. As with that article, the book has the benefit of an exceptional living witness to bring readers as close to the scene as you'd want to get: Montreal police officer Robert Côté, a key member and eventual leader of the force's bomb squad, who personally defused dozens of FLQ bombs.

Much has been written about the FLQ's terror spree, "a peacetime crisis unlike any that came before or since," including memoirs from key players at the time and a surprising number of accounts by the terrorists themselves. Jenish adds a worthwhile, highly readable, comprehensive, and judiciously balanced account of the episode.

He situates the FLQ revolutionaries as very much creatures of the time, where movements around the world, most of them driven by communist ideology, were seeking to toss off the yoke of colonialism through violent tactics. In particular, the FLQ militants looked to the struggles for liberation happening in Cuba and Algeria. Writes Jenish: "The founders of the FLQ had come to see Quebec as not a province but a colony, and French-speaking Quebeckers as not a minority but a colonized people, and the English not as fellow citizens but occupiers."

The FLQ's tactics shifted from bombings to kidnappings in 1970. An initial target was an Israeli official, but that plot was foiled when police pulled over the plotters' van with a faulty tail light. The U.S. consul in Montreal was also targeted, but that scheme, too, was uncovered. So it was finally British trade commissioner James Cross who was the prey when kidnappers rang at his Westmount door early in the morning of October 5, with a "birthday present" for the diplomat.

Members of another FLQ cell were in Texas raising money through fraud scams when they heard of the Cross kidnapping. They raced back to Quebec and made plans to kidnap their own target. They settled on Quebec Labour Minister Pierre Laporte, who had the fatal misfortune of living within a short drive of an FLQ hideaway. He was kidnapped on October 10 and then strangled to death with his own gold crucifix chain on October 17.

The death of Pierre Laporte and the Cross kidnapping — Cross was released after eight weeks in captivity — marked the end of the FLQ as a force for Quebec independence; but it was not the end of the separatist movement, with the Parti Québécois taking power through the ballot box six years later.

James Cross, as of this writing, is ninety-seven years old and living in England. According to Jenish, he "never forgot the ordeal he endured, nor did he forgive his abductors."

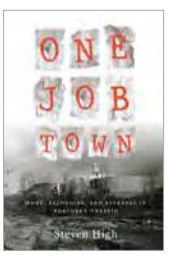
For those who have forgotten much of the detail of the October Crisis and its roots, and for those for whom it's undiscovered territory, Jenish has written a must-read guide.

Reviewed by **Peter Black**, a long-time Quebec City resident, former CBC Radio journalist, freelance writer for a variety of media, and regular columnist for the *Quebec Chronicle-Telegraph*, *Sherbrooke Record*, and *Plattsburgh Press-Republican*.

RESOURCE CULTURE

## One Job Town: Work, Belonging, and Betrayal in Northern Ontario

by Steven High
University of Toronto Press,
392 pages, $39.95




Today, the working lives of many Canadians are defined by long commutes, high-rise towers, and encountering throngs of anonymous faces on the way to the office. There was a time, however, when a good number of the country's labourers had their daily routines marked by the high pitch of their mill's

shift whistle, the exchange of friendly greetings to their familial co-workers, and the sight — and sometimes-ghastly smell — of steam rising from their factory's chimney.

Steven High makes the disappearance from the Canadian landscape of one of those industrial plants — the pulp and paper mill in Sturgeon Falls, Ontario — the subject of his latest book, *One Job Town: Work, Belonging, and Betrayal in Northern Ontario*. The book is built upon the traditional documentary evidence historians have long tapped, but more importantly it is founded on a treasure trove of oral interviews that High and several local students conducted with former mill employees.

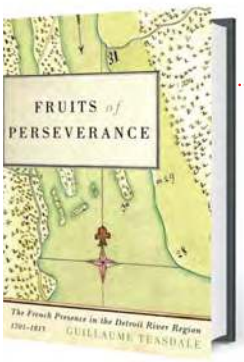
The mill itself serves merely as the backdrop to High's story, so he retells this aspect of the tale in relatively short order. Constructed in 1898 to tap the region's supply of pulpwood, it sputtered during its nascent years, endured several long closures (including from 1904 to 1912 and from 1930 to 1947), enjoyed a relatively prolonged golden period after the Second World War, and then began a slow yet steady decline in 1969 when one of its lines closed. In total, six firms owned the mill, with the final one — Weyerhaeuser, an American behemoth — making the decision in 2002 to close the plant permanently and, thereafter, to demolish it and to shred practically all its archival records.

High devotes the bulk of his book to the memories the mill's former employees hold about the industrial culture they created and how they endured its destruction. Although historians, High included, have recounted similar stories before, he is perhaps the first to focus on how this process played out on the "resource periphery" in Northern Ontario. In casting a spotlight on Sturgeon Falls, he stresses the political relations that pervaded all aspects of work for those who toiled in the town's relatively small pulp and paper mill.

Although formal labour disputes were remarkably rare at the plant, High repeatedly returns to the theme of "mill colonialism." He describes how deep divisions existed and power struggles were continually fought between the largely anglophone "outsider" managerial class, that was situated symbolically upstairs in the plant, and the overwhelmingly francophone workers on the shop floor, who generally came from the local region.

High asserts that this hierarchical class struggle was exemplified by the presence until the early 1970s of a single English-language high school whose existence the company vehemently defended in the overwhelmingly francophone town. He argues that the successful battle waged by Franco-Ontarians to gain their own


*History Beyond Borders*

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high school in Sturgeon Falls was an integral part of the period's "decolonization movement" and relates it to the struggles fought during the Quiet Revolution in Quebec.

Nevertheless, High also underscores the complexity of this story. Workers were indelibly stamped with the date on which they were hired, for example, and union rules dictated that their seniority formed a permanent barrier among them. Moreover, workers may have loathed the company that owned the mill, but they deeply valued the employment it gave them because of the relatively high wages and the job security they had enjoyed. Similarly, they tenaciously fought to preserve the mill's history; a massive binder chronicling it survives as a testament to their pride in their erstwhile workplace. High also stresses the gaping fissures that often separated local union members from their leaders.

The book's strength is High's ability to tell this story from a deeply personal perspective. His use of extensive oral interviews with former employees provides intimate glimpses into the wide range of raw emotions that such traumatic events elicit.

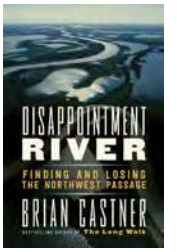
Moreover, High openly admits that this is a story near and dear to his heart. Not only was he a professor at nearby Nipissing University both during and after the mill's final days, he is also a native of another blue-collar city in northern Ontario — Thunder Bay — and the son of a railway worker. His deep-seated affinity for the plight of the workers and of the towns that are losing industries that have long sustained them pervades the pages of this book.

Reviewed by **Mark Kuhlberg**, professor of history at Laurentian University in Sudbury, Ontario, and author of numerous publications that deal with the history of Canada's pulp and paper industry.

A FOREIGN LAND

## Disappointment River: Finding and Losing the Northwest Passage

by Brian Castner
McClelland & Stewart, 359 pages, $35




The clouds over the mountains to the west of the Mackenzie River looked like "three enormous flying saucers descending on us." They "were layered, like plates or shelves, the sky behind nothing but black. The temperature dropped twenty degrees."

Author Brian Castner was retracing the 1789 journey of fur trader Alexander Mackenzie to the Arctic coast. Castner and his paddling companion scrambled ashore and erected their tent, but "the front hit like a concussion, a wall of thickened menacing air.

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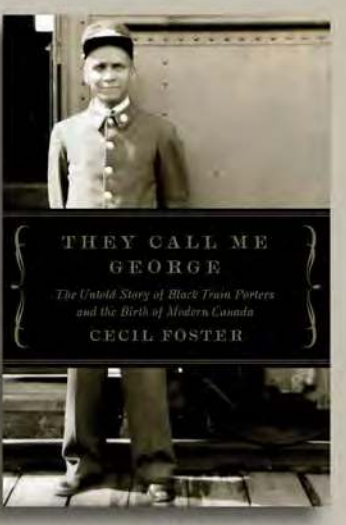


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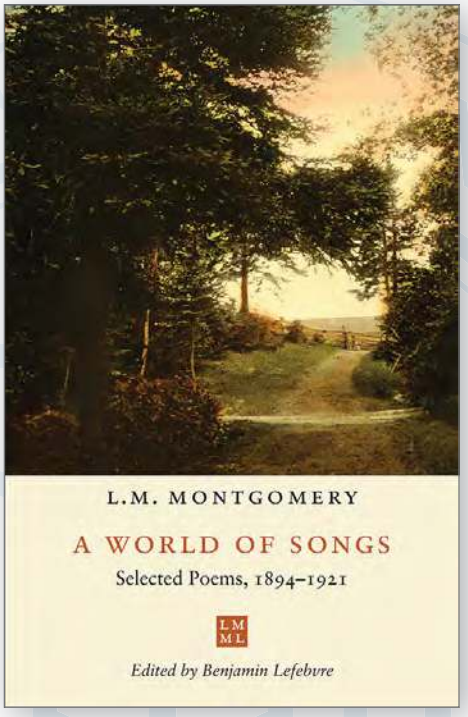


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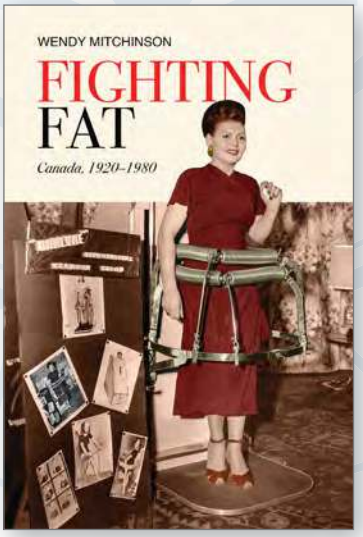
Selected Poems, 1894–1921

L.M. Montgomery

Edited by Benjamin Lefebvre

*World of Songs: Selected Poems, 1894–1921*, the second volume in The L.M. Montgomery Library, gathers a selection of fifty poems originally published across a twenty-five-year period, echoing many motifs that readers of Montgomery's novels will recognize.

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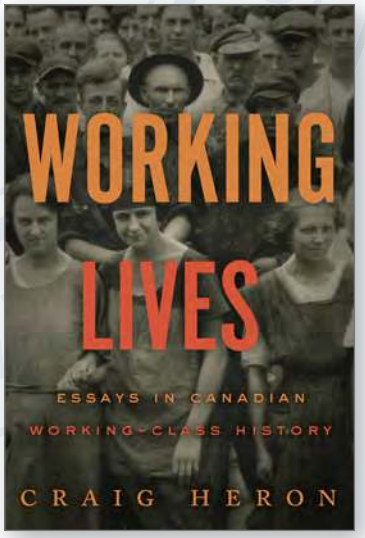


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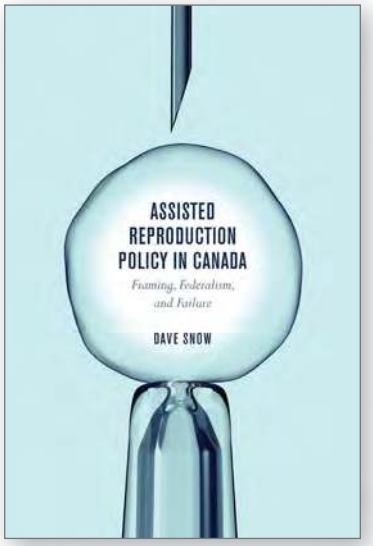


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The tent recoiled as if struck, the outer shell suddenly pummelled by wind and fat drops of rain. The whole shelter was vibrating."

The front stakes tore out, the tent collapsed, and the two men found themselves trying to regroup while "soaked in the driving rain and only half-dressed, boxers and no shirts."

This is one of many vivid passages from the new book *Disappointment River*. Castner is a skilled writer who, no mean feat, manages to interweave the tale of his own adventure on the great river with what history-buff Canadians regard as the familiar story of Mackenzie's epochal quest.

The writing is excellent. But this book feels especially fresh because, while most historians treat fur-trading explorers in either a British or a Canadian context, Castner brings an American perspective to the table.

When was the last time you saw Washington Irving quoted on the fur trade? Right. Yet Castner cites that nineteenth-century man of letters three times. Castner does not ignore the Laurentian thesis — that Canadian economic development came mainly from resource exploitation — or the foundational nature of the fur trade, but he is more inclined to reference the American Revolution or the 1760 capture of Detroit.

"In traditional American mythology," he writes, "we associate the West with opportunity, but the North is known for hardship. Their conjunction — in the Northwest Passage, North West Company, Northwest Territories — speaks to both ideas. You go north and west to test yourself, but in pursuit of an objective."

Castner mentions that, before leaving home, he read widely in Canadian newspapers and books. And the paddler is acutely aware of being a foreigner in a strange land. One of his companions makes a joke, he writes, "in an exaggerated northern Wisconsin accent that came off as vaguely Canadian." He notes that one man he meets has "good looks that I'd call All-American if he weren't Canadian, born and bred in the North."

Elsewhere, while driving northwest through rural towns, Castner writes: "'No wonder Canadians seem to be natural socialists and praise collective effort,' I thought. 'Their land is too big, they too few.'"

Again, this is not off-putting but refreshing. Here's an American showing an interest in a landscape, a social reality, and a history beyond the borders of the United States.

Castner mentions that the Dene of the Northwest Territories and the Navaho of the American southwest share the same ancestry and speak mutually comprehensible languages. He takes care to name Indigenous individuals wherever possible and notes that one eighteenth-century Dene figure guided Europeans to the Arctic coast twice. Before travelling with Mackenzie, Awgeenah — also known as Mistapoose, Nestabeck, and the English Chief — descended the Coppermine River to its mouth with Matonabbee and Samuel Hearne.

Castner and his fellow paddlers — four men joined him for one leg each — canoed 1,810 kilometres in 2016, battling headwinds, exposure, mosquitoes, thieves, and white-water rapids. He tells their gruelling story while also bringing Alexander Mackenzie vividly to life. This book is a keeper.

Reviewed by **Ken McGoogan**, the author, most recently, of *Dead Reckoning: The Untold Story of the Northwest Passage*.

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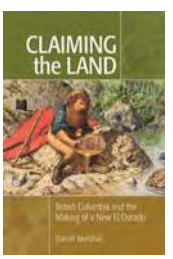
**CHAOTIC BEGINNINGS**

## Claiming the Land: British Columbia and the Making of a New El Dorado

by Daniel Marshall
Ronsdale Press, 424 pages, $24.95




The names of the people who first discovered gold in British Columbia have been lost, if they were ever known at all. Several people claimed the discovery as their own, but it has been proven that Indigenous people were trading the metal before the spring of 1858, when word of gold along the Fraser River reached San Francisco.

The first gold rush in British Columbia came after the big California rush of 1849, and San Francisco had many gold seekers eager for something to do. The discovery on the Fraser River gave them a new destination, and with gold in their minds they flooded north.

Their arrival changed the area in many ways, as Victoria historian Daniel Marshall explains in his comprehensive, engaging account of a pivotal year in British Columbia and in what became Canada. The gold rush, while driven in large part by Americans, helped to pave the way for the creation of a new colony and, a decade later, for the acceptance of the region into the Canadian Confederation.

Canada's Pacific province could easily have become part of the United States instead. It took strong resolve from Governor James Douglas and others to ensure that it remained under British control.

Marshall takes us away from the common notion of what the gold rush was all about — the idea that a few thousand men came north, made their way to the goldfields, spent time there as part of one big happy family, and headed south again.

It was uglier than that. Chaos reigned as opposing forces wrestled for control of the gold and of the land. The American border was porous, to say the least, and it was only the rugged terrain that enabled authorities to have any sort of control and to prevent the land from being overrun.

The area was, effectively, a lawless territory, quite similar to the situation in many parts of the western United States at the time. Foreign elements took the law into their own hands and met little or no opposition. Large areas of the goldfields were in the hands of self-appointed militia groups.

The Indigenous population suffered greatly. Some of the new arrivals were eager to simply exterminate the

people who were already on the land and were in their way. There were several serious attempts to do just that, with Indigenous people ambushed and killed. It was war, simply put, and it was waged from the Okanagan Valley to the gold areas along the Fraser. It is shocking that these horrific slaughters are not better known, but Marshall's efforts might help to correct and to expand upon common knowledge.

The only way to keep the peace, it seemed, was to set aside reserves for Indigenous peoples, so the gold rush of 1858 helped to shape the long-term allocation of land. (Of course, before that land was allocated, it was carefully checked to ensure that it had no obvious value.)

The gold rush led to the formal creation of the Colony of British Columbia on November 19, 1858. However, in advance of that date, Douglas already exerted authority over the region, despite no proper recognition that he could.

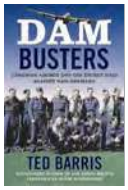
The year 1858 is considered the birth of British Columbia as we know it, but the events of that year have never before been considered as critically and exhaustively as they are in this book.

Marshall has, in effect, rewritten the pivotal history of the birth of the province. This book is long overdue and will form the basis for further research for years to come.

Reviewed by **Dave Obee**, the publisher of the *Victoria Times Colonist* and a member of the board of Canada's History Society.

# MORE BOOKS

**Dam Busters: Canadian Airmen and the Secret Raid against Nazi Germany**
by Ted Barris
Patrick Crean Editions, 484 pages, $34.99




The iconic Dam Busters raid is well-known in Britain thanks to books and films but less well-known in Canada. In the spring of 1943, an elite squadron of mostly experienced pilots and crews was created for a top-secret raid on Germany's hydroelectric dams. For several months they trained in low-level night flying, learning to drop a top-secret "bouncing" bomb with extreme precision.

On the night of May 16 to 17, 1943, the newly created 617 squadron released its weapon in a daring and costly raid that breached the Mohne and Eder dams. Despite the spectacular results of the raid, German industry recovered in the months ahead, and the blow was not nearly as damaging as had been hoped.

Canadian historian and storyteller Ted Barris has assembled an excellent review of Operation Chastise that also looks at Canada's war in the air and the results of the Commonwealth Air Training Plan.

The Canadians who participated in the raid — including Torger Taerum, Lewis Burpee, John Fraser, and Vincent MacCausland — should be held among the highest order of those who served during the Second World War. *Dam Busters* provides an exceptional tribute to their stories and sacrifice, something that was long overdue. — *Joel Ralph*

**Yardwork:**
**A Biography of an Urban Place**
by Daniel Coleman
Wolsak and Wynn, 272 pages, $20

Daniel Coleman isn't afraid to ask the tough questions. "What happens to the place itself," he wonders in the first pages of *Yardwork*, "if every generation is just a-passin' through?" Perhaps, to find the answers, we don't need to look further than our own backyards.

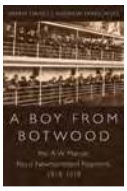
A child of missionaries in Uganda, Coleman eventually settled in Hamilton in 1997 to teach Canadian literature at McMaster University. *Yardwork: A Biography of an Urban Place* is his journey to belong there, to intimately understand the place's stories — using his garden in the shadow of the Niagara Escarpment as a frame of reference.

Coleman begins with the soil and its hidden complexities as a way to ask, who was here before us? He introduces us to Indigenous belief systems and the people of the Six Nations who lived on this land first, then he discusses settler narratives.

It's a nuanced, refreshing approach to telling local history. *Yardwork* gently shifts our perspectives as we encounter the various characters that inhabit the author's backyard — the watershed that hides below the surface, the broken pine, the urban deer.

*Yardwork* is a narrow study, but its reach is wide and the themes are universal. With writing that is often lyrical, Coleman asks us to reflect on what it means to be a settler on colonized land, to be a human on a waning earth, or, most simply, to call a place home. — *Sharon Hanna*

**A Boy from Botwood: Pte. A.W. Manuel, Royal Newfoundland Regiment, 1914–1919**
by Bryan Davies and Andrew Traficante
Dundurn Press, 176 pages, $22.99




Private Arthur W. Manuel, who joined the Newfoundland Regiment in 1914, didn't share many details with his family about his experience during the First World War. But in 2011, nearly thirty years after Manuel's death, his grandson found an unmarked shoebox among family belongings.

The box contained four hundred pages of transcriptions and sixty hours of recordings about the Great War — which became the raw material for *A Boy from Botwood*. The book shares Manuel's first-hand account of the First World War, including his experiences of major battles and his remarkably detailed account of his time as a prisoner of war.

In 1980, at age eighty-four, Manuel recorded himself describing the war and hired a stenographer to transcribe his words. Bryan Davies, a writer and historian, and Andrew Traficante, a high school teacher, fact-checked,

compiled, and edited Manuel's war stories. In *A Boy from Botwood*, Davies and Traficante also contribute texts that clarify and summarize the events Manuel described in the original transcripts.

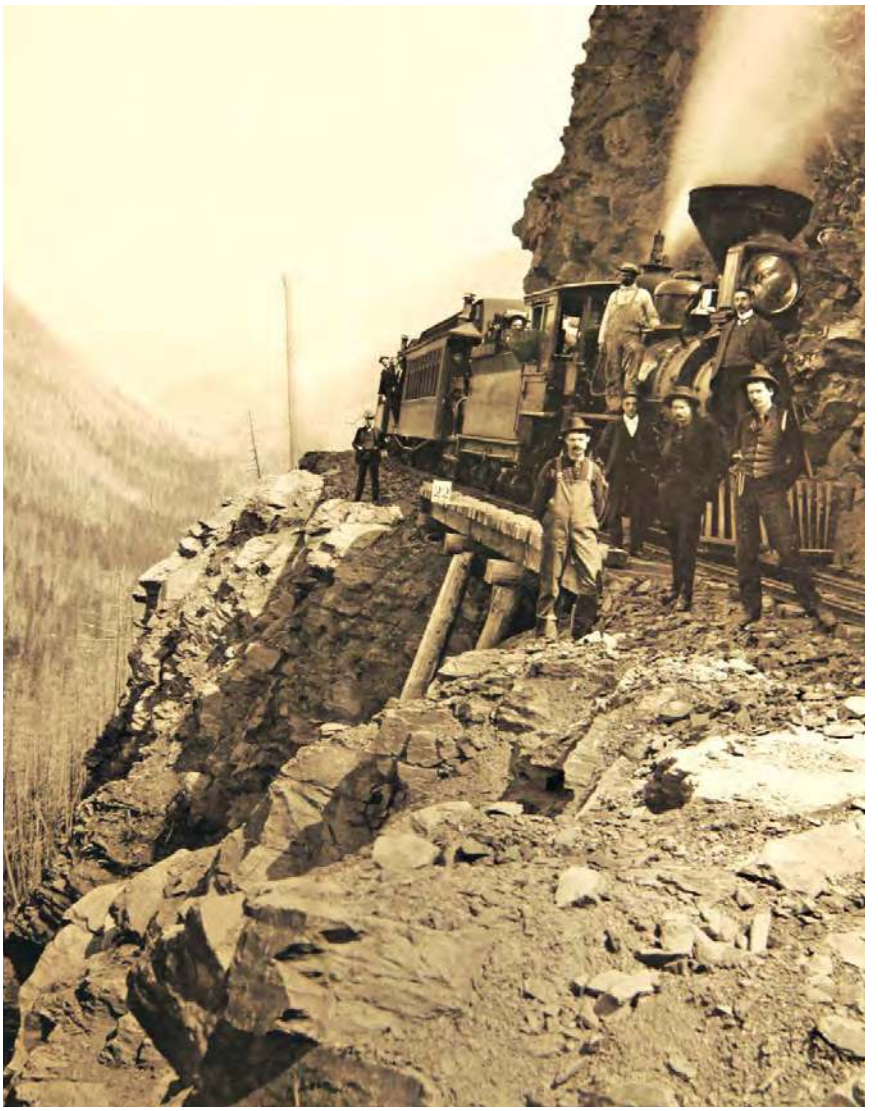
Manuel is a strong storyteller and provides vivid details that bring the reader with him during his time in the trenches and as a prisoner of war, and then alongside him and his dictation machine as he revisits his former life. — *Kaitlin Vitt*

**Trance Speakers: Femininity and Authorship in Spiritual Séances, 1850–1930**
by Claudie Massicotte
McGill-Queen's University Press,
278 pages, $110

In Victorian society, women were seen as inherently passive. But in *Trance Speakers* Claudie Massicotte shows how spiritualists such as New York's Fox sisters (Leah, Margaret, and Kate) and Canadian author Susanna Moodie used the role of medium to turn this fragility into a strength.

Massicotte asserts that the appearance of being controlled by spirits ironically allowed mediums to speak more freely, because the voices they used were not their own, and she uses this to raise a number of difficult questions about the nature of speech. As one of the first books to examine the history of seances in Canada, *Trance Speakers* places the phenomenon within the context of an era that saw an increasing focus on the question of women's proper roles as well as a greater number of women leaving the home in one way or another.

Massicotte is an assistant professor of literary theory and criticism, and her prose is sophisticated and often theoretically dense. That said, the number of fascinating figures and events that appear in her book may make it accessible enough for more casual readers, especially those who are interested in women's history. — *Alex Judge*



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**FACING THE FRONTIER** This 1897 photograph of Payne Bluff, where "sensitive" train passengers were advised to look away from the steep precipice, demonstrates the often-extreme terrain through which railways were built in British Columbia. The photograph made by R.H. Trueman shows the Kaslo & Slocan line near Sandon, B.C., and is one of hundreds reproduced in *Iron Road West: An Illustrated History of British Columbia's Railways*, by geographer Derek Hayes (Harbour Publishing, 240 pages, $44.95). In this book, Hayes reveals how railways contributed to British Columbia's development as well as to the province's entry into Confederation, and he describes both the fierce competition and the frontier environment during their construction.

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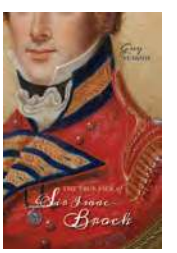

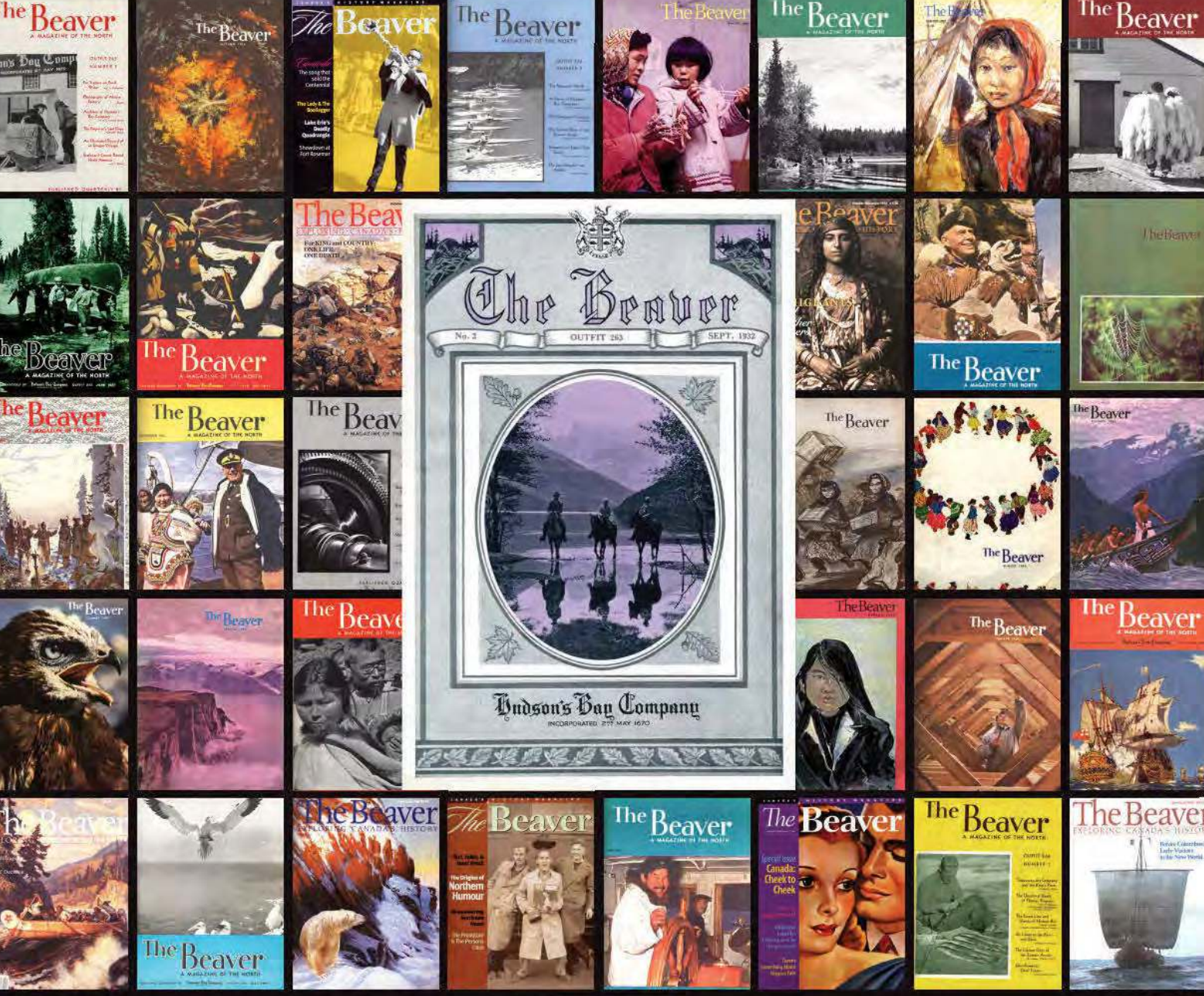


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CANADA'S HISTORY

# Under the microscope

## Home DNA tests are helping to solve police cold cases. *by Paul Jones*

In the summer of 2018, news from DNA labs momentarily elbowed politics, celebrities, and sports from the headlines. Connoisseurs of crime detection were fascinated by the capture of the alleged "Golden State Killer," which was promptly followed by the arrest of a clutch of suspects in comparably ancient cold cases. Researchers using the everyday tools of genetic genealogy had succeeded in unravelling mysteries that had defied solution for decades. To the press and the public, it all seemed like something from science fiction.

Regular readers of this column might have thought differently. My friend Elizabeth's struggle to identify her biological father ("Cellular sleuthing," August-September 2017) was every bit as complicated as a police procedural — and she used many of the same tools and modes of thinking. Similarly, my ultimately successful search for my illegitimate grandfather's father entailed countless hours of combing through both historical records and DNA-test findings.

So, if researchers can use DNA to identify the biological parents of aging adoptees, the undocumented fathers of nineteenth-century "baseborn" children, or even the details of a century-old "switched-at-birth" hospital error, then it should come as no surprise that they can figure out the identity of a murderer or rapist who left his DNA at the scene of a crime just two or three decades ago.

Actually, as it turns out, it's quite straightforward. "Already, sixty percent of Americans of Northern European descent — the primary group using [DNA testing] sites — can be identified through such databases whether or not they've joined one themselves," the *New York Times* reported in October in an article about a newly published study in the journal *Science*.

"Within two or three years, ninety percent of Americans of European descent will be identifiable from their DNA, researchers found." Figures for Canada are not known, but they cannot be much different.

CeCe Moore, the professional genealogist who has solved more than a dozen of these cases, predicted to NBC News that we will see dozens of cold cases resolved in upcoming months and hundreds over the next few years. Jay Cook and Tanya Van Cuylenborg, the victims in one of Moore's earliest cases, were Canadians. There are signs that our police departments have noted these developments, and it is just a matter of time until a Canadian criminal is apprehended.

DNA testing has revolutionized genealogy.

Since 2016, Roots has on four occasions explored the power and limitations of autosomal DNA, which is to say, the DNA you inherit equally from each parent. It's also the principal genetic tool used in resolving these criminal cases.

The advent of genetic cyber-sleuthing is just the most dramatic of the many developments in the science and business of DNA testing that have taken place since this column began. Here are some others:

- GEDmatch, the open-data DNA website used by Moore and others to identify criminals from their DNA, has changed its terms of service to acknowledge this use by law enforcement. The terms expressly forbid use by police in non-violent crimes. Privacy critics are not happy. I plan to write further about these ethical issues in a future column.
- Two reputable companies (Living DNA and MyHeritage) have joined the three already on the scene (23andMe, AncestryDNA, and Family Tree DNA) in offering affordable, high-quality tests to the genealogical community. (Regrettably, outmoded tests are still being sold to the unwary by other vendors, often using confusingly similar names.) Costs are dropping, and whole-genome sequencing is now becoming an option for the well heeled; within two years, it should be affordable for the average researcher.
- There has been an explosion in the availability of third-party analytic tools, such as GEDmatch, that help researchers to analyze and to visualize their genetic findings.
- The design and interpretation of ethnic, regional, and national analyses etc. ("admixture") are constantly improving but still have a long way to go. It remains the case that most people who know the origins of all four of their grandparents will discover little that is both unexpected and reliable. However, admixture tests are increasingly helpful in cases of adoption or illegitimacy, where any clue about an unknown parent or grandparent may be the catalyst needed to make a breakthrough.

Paul Jones, a former publisher, is a writer, a consultant and an avid genealogist. To learn more about DNA testing, check out the Canada's History Guide to DNA Testing, at CanadasHistory.ca/DNAforBeginners.

ISTOCK

Egerton Ryerson

John A. Macdonald

Edward Cornwallis

# Questioning the past

How to better understand commemoration controversies. *by Lindsay Gibson*

Controversies about statues and commemorations have recently fuelled public debate in Canada.

What has been missing from these polarizing arguments is a set of questions that can help Canadians to engage thoughtfully in these conversations.

The six historical-thinking concepts outlined by the University of British Columbia's Dr. Peter Seixas (see historicalthinking.ca) provide a framework that encourages meaningful investigation of historical problems.

Historical thinking is the foundation for social studies curricula in Canada and is being used by museums, heritage organizations, and the public to deepen understanding of the past. I propose a series of questions that invite students, teachers, and the public to think historically about whether commemorations of an event, person, or group should be kept as is, revised, or removed.

**Evidence** focuses on assessing the context and content of primary and secondary sources. Commemorations have their own history and need to be interpreted and analyzed.

- When and where was the commemoration created? Who created the commemoration, and why?
- What was happening in society when the commemoration was created?
- What claims are being made about the subject?
- Do other sources support or refute the interpretation of the subject being commemorated?

**Historical Significance** focuses on assessing what events, people, or groups are worthy of study.

- Is the subject being commemorated historically significant? Did the subject cause changes that had deep consequences for many people over a long period of time? Does it highlight enduring or emerging issues in history or contemporary society?
- Does the historical significance of the subject vary for different groups?

**Continuity and Change** focuses on examining what has changed and stayed the same over time.

- Have interpretations of the subject changed or stayed the same?

**Cause and Consequence** focuses on what led to and resulted from events or from the actions of historical individuals.

- What were the expected and unexpected consequences of the subject being commemorated?
- To what degree could the negative consequences have been anticipated and avoided, or the positive consequences foreseen and enhanced?

**Historical Perspectives** focuses on understanding the social, cultural, intellectual, and emotional beliefs, values, and practices that shaped people's lives in the past.

- Were the beliefs held by the subject commonly held at the time?
- What diverse historical perspectives existed about the subject?

The **Ethical Dimension** focuses on making judgments about whether the actions of historical actors were justified and on assigning blame or credit to individuals or groups for their actions. Decisions about what should be done about commemorations are central to the ethical dimension.

- Were the actions taken by the subject acceptable given the attitudes and beliefs that existed at the time? Would the actions taken be acceptable given contemporary standards?
- Should the subject be commemorated, given its historical legacy? Is its historical legacy aligned with the beliefs and values of the community?
- Does the commemoration negatively impact individuals or groups in the community?

These questions, while not definitive, can help citizens to think historically about the past. Doing so is essential for civic engagement and for using the past to inform present and future actions.

Lindsay Gibson is an assistant professor in the Department of Elementary Education at the University of Alberta. An original version of this article, "Thinking Historically about Canadian Commemoration Controversies," was published on ActiveHistory.ca.

LEFT: ARCHIVES OF ONTARIO, CENTRE: LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA, RIGHT: ALAMY

# Governor General's History Awards

Canada's History Society is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2018 Governor General's History Awards. For more information, visit CanadasHistory.ca/Awards

## Governor General's History Awards

**Excellence in Teaching**

*Presented by Canada's History with the support of TD Bank Group*

Lisa Howell, Pierre Elliott Trudeau Elementary School, Gatineau, QC

Temma Frecker, The Booker School, Port Williams, NS

Paul Paterson, Westmount Secondary School, Hamilton, ON

Lisl Gunderman, Wildwood School, and Maxine Hildebrandt, Mother Earth's Children's Charter School, AB

Eric Chassé, École Internationale Lucille-Teasdale, Brossard, QC

Jean-François Gosselin, École Marcelle-Mallet, Lévis, QC

**Excellence in Museums: History Alive!**

*Presented by the Canadian Museums Association with the support of Ecclesiastical Insurance*

"Footprints: A Walk Through Generations" Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute, Ouje-Bougoumou, QC

**Excellence in Popular Media: The Pierre Berton Award**

*Presented by Canada's History*

Bill Waiser, Saskatoon, SK

**Excellence in Community Programming**

*Presented by Canada's History*

"Shiloh Centre for Multicultural Roots Oral History Project," Shiloh Centre for Multicultural Roots, Edmonton, AB

"Mon vélo raconte," Société d'histoire et de généalogie de Montréal-Nord et les Artistes en arts visuels du Nord de Montréal, Montréal, QC

**Excellence in Scholarly Research: The Sir John A. Macdonald Prize**

*Presented by the Canadian Historical Association with the support of Manulife Financial*

Elsbeth Heaman, *Tax, Order, and Good Government: A New Political History of Canada, 1867–1917,* McGill University, Montreal, QC

## Other Awards

**Experiences Canada Award**

*Presented by Experiences Canada*

Pat Watson, Elgin, ON

**Indigenous Arts and Stories**

*Presented by Historica Canada*

Tehatsistahawi Kennedy, London, ON
Beausoleil First Nation

Jared Boechler, Saskatoon, SK
Métis

Leah Baptiste, Brooks, AB
Deline, NT

Shelby Lisk, Belleville, ON
Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory

**Kayak Kids' Illustrated History Challenge**

*Presented by Canada's History with the support of TD Bank Group*

Jonathan Chassé, Gaspé, QC

Kaira Picard, Whitby, ON

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# Rich harvest

This photo was taken circa 1945 in the Joe Rich Valley approximately twenty-five kilometres east of Kelowna, B.C. The truck is loaded with iceberg lettuce that was grown on the Weddell farm. The lettuce was next taken to Kelowna, loaded onto rail cars packed with ice, and sent eastward.

At the time this photo was taken, the Joe Rich Valley was a small farming community at the end of a gravel road. Now Highway 33 goes from Kelowna east through Joe Rich and continues south to Rock Creek close to the United States border. Joe Rich was named after the man said to be the first settler in the valley, an American alleged horse thief seeking refuge from justice.

Pictured are the Weddells' hired hand Albert (second from left) and siblings (from left) Margaret, Stuart, Patricia, David, and Jimmy Weddell. Their father, Cyril Weddell, arrived in the Joe Rich Valley in the early 1920s, when there were already a few families farming there. Cyril married Mary Shanks, the teacher at the local one-room schoolhouse. Members of the Weddell family continue to live in the Joe Rich Valley.

*Submitted by Alexandra Carriere and Cyril Bubar of Kelowna, B.C. Bubar's mother is Patricia Weddell.*

Do you have a photograph that captures a moment, important or ordinary, in Canada's history? If so, have it copied (please don't send priceless originals) and mail it to Album, c/o Canada's History, Bryce Hall, Main Floor, 515 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3B 2E9. Or email your photo to album@CanadasHistory.ca. Please provide a brief description of the photo, including its date and location. If possible, identify people in the photograph and provide further information about the event or situation illustrated. Photos may be cropped or adjusted as necessary for presentation in the magazine. To have your posted submission returned, please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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**Beaverbrook Vimy Prize submission deadline: March 3, 2019.**

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